

*SERVE WITH INTEGRITY*  
*LIFE EXPERIENCES*  
&  
*LESSONS LEARNED*

Shared By West Point's Class of 1970



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## Dedication

We dedicate this book to the Class of 2020. May these life experiences and lessons learned from the Class of 1970 help you in the coming decades. We encourage your class to consider publishing a similar book before your 50<sup>th</sup> reunion in 2070.

## Acknowledgments

The class of 1970 appreciates the helpful contributions of James Sullivan, Charlie McGee, Frank Monaco, Ed Mitchell, John Norton, Terry Johnson, Skip Clarkson, Bill Knowlton, and Mac Love for bringing the idea of a class lessons learned book to reality. However, this book was only achieved by early authors encouraging other classmates to submit a meaningful life experience.

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## Preface – The Corps

2008 gender-neutral version of the song  
by Bishop H.S. Shipman

The Corps bareheaded, salute it  
With eyes up thanking our God  
That we of the corps are treading  
Where they of the corps have trod

|

They are here in ghostly assemblage  
The ranks of the corps long dead  
And our hearts are standing attention  
While we wait for their passing tread

|

The Corps of today, we salute you  
The Corps of an earlier day  
We follow close order behind you  
Where you have pointed the way

|

The long grey line of us stretches  
Through the years of a century told  
And the last one feels to the marrow  
The grip of your far off hold

|

Grip hands, though it be from the shadows  
While we swear as you did of yore  
Or living or dying to honor  
The Corps, and The Corps, and The Corps





## Purpose Section

### The Concept

In the Spring of 2022, a classmate presented an intriguing idea to our class leader and several classmates.

“Imagine creating a modern way to ‘grip hands’ with past and future graduating classes. Instead of just singing the song *The Corps*. Consider a meaningful, useful transfer of wisdom in the form of lessons learned, gained during sixty or more years of experience, assembled from hundreds of graduates and their wives.

“Imagine asking each of our classmates and their wives this question: If there was one experience **during your life** that you could pass on to your children, or a close friend in need, or to our affiliated class of 2020 that graduated 50 years after we did — what lesson learned would you share that you gained before, during, or after graduation?

“Imagine the benefit of creating an eBook containing such life experiences (LE) and associated lessons learned (LL) for West Pointers who graduate after our class. Envision going beyond just combat lessons learned like S.L.A. Marshal gathered and published during and after WW II, Korea, and Vietnam.

“Then visualize the National Museum of the U.S. Army, the academy museum, and the academy library displaying the West Point Class of 1970’s book of lessons learned. Also, think about the academy history and military art departments using portions of the book for instructional purposes during classroom and field training.

“Finally, consider if subsequent West Point classes follow our lead. In your mind’s eye, picture a digital library shelf with 25, 50, or 100 such books titled Wisdom from the Class of xxxx.”

### The Response

After our class accepted the challenge described above, Class Leader James (Sully) Sullivan formed a small team to birth and deliver the book to the graduating class of 2020 by no later than our 55<sup>th</sup> class reunion on 18 May 2025. The assembled pathfinder team quickly clarified the **purpose** and **complexity** of the task before them. The team included:

Ed Mitchell 2<sup>nd</sup> Regt, Sr Editor & Publisher

John Norton      3<sup>rd</sup> Regt, Assistant Editor  
Terry Johnson    3<sup>rd</sup> Regt, stepped in as Assistant Editor after John Norton passed  
Charlie McGee    4<sup>th</sup> Regt, Class Historian, Lead Reviewer  
Frank Monaco    4<sup>th</sup> Regt, Class Information Officer

Our **purpose** is to make this document a 21<sup>st</sup> century way of gripping hands with the graduates of other West Point classes. It can well be explained using the lesson learned submitted by Steve Roberts D-2, who said: “Just as the chain of command is an essential factor for military effectiveness, so is the concept of mentorship. And effective mentorship to those junior to you aids in their success, and their success adds to the strength and effectiveness of the United States military.”

We see this anthology of life lessons learned by the Class of 1970 as a valuable form of mentorship to classes that graduate after us and to future instructors teaching at the Academy.

Given that the class motto is “Serve With Integrity,” numerous lessons in this book stem from the Academy oath we all swore to live by:

“I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do.”

Additionally, we recognized that valuable lessons learned can come during times when a person is at their best or at their worst. So, we sought both types of life experience and found that each type generated insightful lessons learned.

The **complexity** of assembling this book was equivalent to putting together a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle without a picture of what the completed puzzle should finally look like. Additionally, as life lessons flow in, they force rearranging the previously sequenced submittals into a better presentation. For example, lessons learned on integrity could appear during a classmate’s academy, officer, or civilian years. Or the integrity lessons could all be grouped together. Plus, some lessons learned are timeless, meaning they apply to cadets, officers, civilians, and family members. Which sequencing is best? Assembly also requires integrating the inputs into an intriguing and entertaining whole.

During two years, we requested life experiences with lessons learned from 639 living classmates, 107 wives of deceased classmates, four honorary members of our Class, and one ex-cadet. Of those people, 146 classmates (23.1%) and 5 wives, submitted 245 life experiences, generating 786 lessons learned clustered in 10 chapters.

Gradually, the eBook grew to 522 pages, with three major content attributes. It is a history book, a repository of lessons learned, and a mirror of the personality of our class.

The men and women authors supplied boots-on-the-ground life experiences during the tumultuous period of America's history from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Those authors participated in or were affected by the following breadth of national and international struggles:

## **The World The Class of 1970 Saw and Lived In**

|

### **Combat Operations**

Our classmates served in or supported these conflicts:

1965	Dominican Republic	Opn Power Pack
1970-75	Vietnam	
1970-89	Cold War	European Theater
1973	Arab-Israeli War	(aka Yom Kippur War)
1970-1990	Korean Demilitarized Zone	
1982	Palestine	UN Truce Supervision Organization
1983	Granada	Operation Urgent Fury
1988-89	Berlin	Fall of the Berlin Wall (Iron Curtain)
1989-90	Panama	Operation Just Cause
1992-95	Somalia	Operation Restore Hope
1994-95	Haiti	Operation Uphold Democracy
1995-96	Bosnia	Operation Provide Promise
1998-99	Kosovo	Operation Allied Force
1999-1990	Kuwait	Operation Desert Shield
Jan-Feb 1991	Kuwait	Operation Desert Storm (ODS, the first-ever attack helicopter versus tank war)
2001-03	Global	Operation War on Terror
2001-14	Afghanistan	Operation Enduring Freedom
2003	Iraq	Operation Iraqi Freedom

## Computer Revolution

- ✓ The West Point class of 1970 was the first class required to take a computer course every year at the Academy.
- ✓ We served while the computer revolution grew from the IBM mainframe to personal computers, then iPhones with GPS everywhere including on the battlefield, social media texting, and cyber warfare.
- ✓ We experienced social media monopolies censoring the free speech of millions of conservative Americans and major news media outlets becoming champions of the Democrat political party.

## National Expansion into Space

- ❖ We heard a Russian satellite beeping signals from space.
- ❖ We watched an American become the first person to walk on the moon.
- ❖ We were shocked by the first space shuttle disaster.
- ❖ We used satellite sensor data to plan and manage military operations.
- ❖ We participated in the emergence of the Air Defense Artillery branch, the National Missile Defense system (Commonly called Star Wars), and later the U.S. Space Force.



2003 Lockheed Martin NMD Interceptor Test  
Meck Island Kwajalein Atoll

## Civil Rights and Women's Rights

- ✓ We were kids during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, when Dr. Martin Luther King championed peaceful protest but was later assassinated.
- ✓ We supported civil rights improvements and equality in the Army, Air Force, and later in business and in our local communities.
- ✓ As civilians, we were appalled in 2020 by the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, during an arrest by the police. And, we were also appalled by the subsequent rioting and community destruction.



1960s Women Rights Leader Gloria Steinem

- ❖ The women's rights movement spread across America when the Supreme Court approved the landmark Roe vs. Wade abortion law. Then decades later, it was overturned by the same court.
- ❖ In the service, we supported the integration of women into the all-volunteer military.
- ❖ We served when Sandra Day O'Connor was confirmed in 1981 as the first female associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and during later confirmations of female associate justices.

## How Our Class Affected The World

Every day, year after year, and forevermore, our class has demonstrated its service to the Academy and the Institution of the Army as shown by the following actions we initiated:

- Funded and supported the annual National Conference on Ethics in America
- Funded and supported the annual Army Cyber Leader's Conference
- Funded and supported the annual MacArthur Cup Award
- Ongoing support of the Military Fortification Renovation Project for Fortress West Point
- Donated the beautiful and enduring Serve With Integrity fountain in the parking lot of the Association of Graduates
- Visualizing and birthing the Class of 1970's Serve With Integrity Life Experiences eBook, allows our Class to be the first to “grip hands” with other classes by digitally sharing the wisdom of the lessons learned that we gained during seven decades of life.
- Visualizing and birthing the Class of 1970's Service Heritage Project book, which presents how our families have contributed to the security of the American Republic since the Revolutionary War to the Global War on Terror.
- As of our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion, we are nearly caught-up memorializing all 124 of our fallen classmates. (We are not there yet but setting records enroute.)

More broadly, the following classmate and spouse actions have touched the lives of many, making a tangible difference in our society and our great nation, always with hearts full of *Duty, Honor, Country* and *Serve With Integrity*.

- 🚩 Created a class Serve With Integrity Award recognizing the extraordinary achievements of individual classmates. Awarded 86 coins from 2023 to January 2025.







USMA Class of 1970 Paver installed at the National Museum of the U.S. Army



## Navigation to Authors and Citation Pages

The book's **structure** includes ten chapters of author-submitted life experiences with associated lessons learned grouped into sub-categories. The experience chapters present ten eras of our journey: Pre-Cadet, Cadet, Ranger School, Real World Missions, Active Duty, Civilian Ventures, Family, Faith, Political Perspectives, and Timeless.

Use the navigation table below to quickly determine if a 1970 classmate or a wife submitted one or more life experiences (citations). To quickly move to an author's life experience(s), open the pdf's "Find" window, and type in the location number, shown in the right-most column. Similarly, a reader can search by the author's name to find where he or she is commented about by another author, as well as the author's life experiences.

Last Name	First Name	CO	# of Citations	Location Number
Alcorn	George	H-3	1	29444
Alcorn	Maggie (Wife)	H-3	1	w29444
Alexander	Joe & Pam	C-2	1	28835
Anonymous1		D-3	1	A001
Anonymous2		B-4	1	A002
Babcock	Robert	G-2	1	28882
Bailey	Steven (Scott)	F-1	1	28806
Barbour	Mark	B-3	1	28876
Barre	Anthony (Tony)	B-3	1	28769
Beahm	Richard	B-4	<b>3</b>	29056
Beasley	John	F-1	<b>2</b>	29310
Boswell	Joseph	A-4	1	29400
Boytim	Thomas	I-4	1	29091
Brace	Alan	C-4	<b>2</b>	29450
Brand	Robert	F-4	1	29168
Brennecke	Lucas	C-3	1	29037
Bruce	William (Corky)	H-2	1	29136
Bryson	Brian	G-2	1	28878

Brown	John	G-2	1	28992
Bryant	John & Linda	C-1	1	29261
Byrd	Douglas	I-1	1	29394
Carlson	John	A-1	1	29380
Carman	Tim	B-1	1	29293
Chavez	Willie (Gullermo)	E-3	1	29163
Cogbill	John	G-4	1	28995
Colacicco	John	C-4	1	29191
Connors	John	A-2	1	28994
Conte	Robert (Bob)	H-2	1	28883
Cornelison	Gary	E-3	1	29166
Cossette	Raymond	H-2	2	29092
Coy	William (Bill)	G-1	1	29423
Crea	Dominick (Dom)	G-4	1	29493
Crumling	Harry	I-3	2	29470
Cunningham	Paul	F-1	1	29164
DeVito	Thomas	D-2	1	28968
Dobiac	John	B-3	1	28906
Dockery	Thomas	C-4	2	29387
Drab	Guy	D-2	1	29392
Dunphy	Patrick & Colleen	H-2	1	29447
Edmonston	Donald	D-4	1	28781
Elliot	William (Bill)	D-3	1	28999
Ellis	Charles	H-1	1	28805
Ennis	Charles	B-4	2	29050
Epley	John	F-2	1	29281
Fadden	Dennis	I-1	1	29008
Faraguna	Joseph (Bobby Joe)	I-1	1	28867
Fardink	Paul	C-2	3	29461
Fishback	John	C-2	2	28814
Forsythe	Barney	C-1	1	28983

Frazer	Donald	D-2	1	29004
Funke	Carl	G-4	1	29051
Galton	Bruce	I-1	1	28958
Gault	Jeffrey	C-4	1	28908
Gerard	Thomas	I-4	1	28762
Gibbons	Raymond	H-2	1	29157
Ginn	Robert	A-3	1	29270
Goodell	Mark	B-3	1	29106
Haas	James (Jim)	B-3	1	29485
Hagan	William (Bill)	A-3	1	29022
Hanna	John	D-3	1	28843
Harper	Gilbert	D-3	7	29104
Harper	Kris (Wife)	D-3	3	w29104
Harris	Phillip	A-1	1	29145
Heaton	Robert	C-2	1	29046
Hirsch	Ed	H-2	1	29269
Hobson	Michael	B-4	1	29442
Holm	John	C-4	3	29323
Holton	Gregory	F-3	5	28815
Homoleski	William	D-1	2	29013
Johnson	Terry	D-3	5	29347
Johnson	Michael (Duck)	B-1	1	28794
Knight	Gregory	D-4	1	28946
Knight	Scott	F-1	1	29077
Knowlton	William	D-1	2	28773
Lane	William	C-4	1	28926
Lee	Gus (Honorary)	CL68	1	L1968
Linke	Carl	C-1	1	29368
Lisi	Alfred	I-3	1	29319
Lough	Fred	G-3	1	28859
Love	Robert	A-4	2	29000
Madeja	Victor	D-3	1	29495

Maertens	Thomas	H-3	1	29209
Malkemes	William	G-3	1	29068
McAteer	Charles	G-4	<b>2</b>	29132
McBeth	William (Bill)	I-3	<b>3</b>	28758
McCabe	Michael	G-4	1	29287
McCall	Peter	H-3	1	29254
McCormick	Roger	H-2	<b>3</b>	29156
McGee	Charles	A-4	1	29301
Measner	Richard	G-3	1	29190
Michalowski	Bruce	G-1	1	28920
Miller	Richard	C-4	1	29219
Mitchell	Eddie	H-2	<b>8</b>	29207
Monaco	Francis	B-4	<b>3</b>	29134
Mowery	James	F-4	1	29356
Murphy	Michael	F-1	1	29445
Norton, Jr	John	B-3	<b>5</b>	29307
Oettinger	Thomas	B-3	1	29294
Pantier	Robert	F-4	<b>7</b>	29021
Parker	Howard	G-3	<b>2</b>	29230
Passaro	Paul	F-2	<b>3</b>	29133
Pella	Peter	C-3	1	28912
Phelan	David	H-2	1	29107
Pratt	Donald	A-1	1	29449
Quirk	Earl (Toby)	E-1	1	29404
Rabaut	Thomas (Tom)	E-4	1	29010
Rank	Steven	B-3	1	29009
Reagor	Dale	H-4	1	28797
Reeder	Joe	E-1	<b>3</b>	29138
Roberts	Steven	D-2	1	29178
Robinson	Bruce	E-1	<b>3</b>	29379
Rosati	Cesare	G-1	1	28793

Rozman	Thomas (Roz)	A-3	<b>6</b>	29484
Rutledge	Richard	I-2	1	29243
Ryan	Harry (Michael)	I-2	1	28792
Schneider	Michael	C-4	1	29214
Schroeder	David	E-2	1	28755
Selby	David	A-2	1	29007
Shadid	Theodore	B-3	1	28768
Shaw	Daniel	B-3	1	29295
Shull	John	D-4	1	28969
Sigmund	Robert	C-2	1	29105
Smith	Edwin (EK)	H-1	<b>5</b>	28846
Snider	Richard	C-4	1	28961
Snow	Michael	B-3	1	29217
Spracher	William	A-3	1	28838
St. Denis	Richard	A-4	<b>2</b>	28830
Stewart	Robert	B-3	1	29439
Sullivan	James (Jim)	I-4	<b>5</b>	29460
Terry	Phillip	E-2	1	29231
Thomas (Bob)	Robert	D-2	1	28832
Thompson	Russell	B-1	1	29262
Thornton	Patrick	D-2	1	28875
Trammel	David	B-2	<b>3</b>	28978
Trivette	William (Bill)	C-3	1	29350
Troxell	Jeffrey	C-4	1	28948
Valliere	James (Fred)	I-4	1	29034
Van Vliet	John	E-4	1	28760
Varnell	David	F-3	<b>2</b>	29326
Vermillion	John	C-2	1	29446
Verrochi	Lawrence (Rock)	G-4	1	29222
Wattendorf	William	D-4	1	29012

Werner	Robert	H-4	1	29427
White	Lawrence	I-4	3	29005
White, Jr	David	C-4	10	29200
Wilson	Steven	I-3	6	28809
Wimberly	Gary	E-4	1	28919
Wittmayer	Chris	I-3	1	28898
Zollo	Robert	I-1	1	29141
	Total # of Life Exp Citations >>		<b>245</b>	
<b>146</b>	<< total # of classmates,			
<b>2</b>	<< plus 2 wive's individually submitted citations			
	<< 3 wive's submitted citations with their husband			
	<b>23.1%</b> of the classmates alive as of 23 Oct 2023,			
	submitted life experiences			

## The Academy Crest





## Chapter 1 — Qualifying for the Academy

Working to get through high school and into the Academy reveals the maturity or lack of maturity and the degree of determination of future classmates, along with some valuable lessons learned.

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### Category: Prep School Appointment

**Oops . . . Loser**

**John (Cicco) Colacicco C-4 29191**

It is a demoralizing body blow to fail to achieve a goal you worked years to complete. It is even more bitter when others in your family did accomplish the goal of attending this country's oldest military academy. In 1966 I had qualified for West Point but did not receive an appointment.



USMAPS shoulder patch



There, I stood as a student soldier in front of the Training Officer for the Army's United States Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS) at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The out briefing would determine where I would be sent as a junior soldier for the rest of my enlistment.

The Training Officer started going through my performance record by reading my scores out loud. "Let's see, top 25% in academics, top 25% in physical training, top 25% in military training, top 25% in leadership . . . Then he stopped speaking as a strange look spread across his face. He looked at me. "You're Colacicco?"

"Yes, sir."

He abruptly stopped the interview, and I left his office. Within the hour, I was standing before Major Quinn, the prep school's commandant, who informed me that I was assigned to USMAPS as an on-the-job training cook. But, when I was not on duty as a cook, my job was to walk the halls of Congress to get an appointment.

Unfortunately, three weeks later, that plan failed. So, on the morning of 1 July 1966, I was working as a permanent party cook because I had yet to receive an appointment to West Point.

So, while my USMAPS classmates were reporting that day at the Academy to the 'Man in the Red Sash', I asked those still assigned to the prep school, "How do you want your eggs?"



At about 0830 hours, I was ordered to report to the commandant, who told me I might get an appointment to West Point if Vice President Humphrey approves. So, I needed to start clearing out of USMAPS immediately.

At 1130 hours, I reported back to the commandant. I was surprised to see my brother, Mike (who had attended USMAPS the year before), standing in the office.

Major Quinn then informed me that I was very lucky. Someone who had received the Vice President's appointment declined it on 30 June. But the next person in line was on a camping trip in Canada and not available. That is why the VP's appointment was not filled, and he approved me for the slot.

Major Quinn congratulated me and told me to jump into my brother's car because he was going to take me to National Airport to catch a flight to New York City. I saluted and left the prep school.

That same day, I reached West Point at 1930 hours. There, I reported to the Cadet Headquarters and was directed to spend the night at Thayer Hotel and report back at 0800 hours on 2 July. Which I did, and the rest is history.

After being sworn in as a new cadet, the best I could figure out was that USMAPS screwed up, got me confused with another Cadet Candidate and, though I was qualified, failed to recommend me for an appointment. However, upon discovering the error, the USMAPS staff and the DA staff that handles USMA appointments started quickly pulling some BIG strings to rectify the mistake. Major Quinn was one of those people.

I met Major Quinn again in 1976 when he was Lieutenant Colonel Quinn, Division S-3, and I was a captain and Armored Cavalry Troop Commander. Then, later in Korea, when Major General Quinn was the Senior Advisor to the Korean Army, I was a major serving as a Tank Battalion Executive Officer.

**Lessons Learned:** I learned three valuable lessons from my experience:

- ✓ The 'System' is not infallible.
- ✓ A strong leader discovering an injustice within the 'System' can rectify the situation. Later in my career, this insight helped me as an Officer when I determined an injustice had been done to one of my soldiers.
- ✓ Being a cook is not an easy or glamorous job. It's incredible how much crap a cook gets on the serving line.

## Category: Athlete Recruitment

### Big Bites Candidate

#### George Alcorn H-3 29444

In 1964, I was recruited to play squash and tennis by Coach Bill Cullen, whom we affectionately called "The Red Baron." Coach Cullen was a disciple of Bobby Knight; God rest his soul. If there were chairs on the tennis courts, I'm sure Coach would have tossed one but I digress.

Having assessed my racquet abilities (squash being WAY better than tennis, and squash players in those days were pretty hard to come by except in guys applying to Ivy League schools), Coach encouraged me to apply to the academy.

I took all the required tests, including a physical exam. After several months, West Point Admissions notified me that I had failed the physical and declined my application – for, of all things, **being underweight**. Unfortunately, I was 6 feet tall and weighed just 130 pounds, while the minimum weight requirement at that time was 140 pounds.

Coach was very happy about that issue because the Admissions Office apparently never assessed my academic performance. It wasn't all that good. Because Coach still hoped to acquire me for squash, he didn't give up on me. He recommended I attend the Bullis Prep school in Silver Spring, MD, for a year, during which time I should work on gaining a few pounds and getting my grades up too!

I spent almost a year at Bullis and did well enough scholastically to be considered for an appointment to West Point. But on the weight front, I didn't do as well. At the end of that year, I still only weighed 135 pounds and Coach still had to get a waiver for my acceptance. What a way to get into West Point!

That takes me to the second part of my story, my early days at West Point, and the dreaded WEIGHT TABLES during Beast Barracks. I doubt they still exist these days, but back then, during meals, plebes were subjected to an onslaught of questions from upperclassmen related to cadet life at the academy (things like the number of days until an event, movies for the week, and other “important” facts). If we got the answers wrong, those of us sitting at the weight tables (because we were somewhat “scrawny”) were forced to eat, and eat . . . and eat. We made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches via an assembly line and then ate one after the other. Desserts were set in front of us -- pies, cakes, whatever was on the menu that day -- and we were told to stuff huge chunks in our mouths. I would return to my room in the South Barracks, sick from being so stuffed, while my roommates were eating toothpaste because they were so hungry.

When it came time to graduate, I barely met the minimum weight requirement for commissioning.

**Lesson Learned:** Weight doesn’t make the man – persistence does.

Short story long, it has taken me over 50 years to put on the weight that I needed back in 1965. Frankly, I could now **easily** qualify for admission and even be eligible for the regular tables. In fact, I should be taking small bites and pushing my plate away and on some days, just eating toothpaste.

## Category: Congressional Appointment

### Corruption Versus Integrity

John Fishback C-2 28814

I believe my Mom was an honorary member of Dad’s USMA class of June 43. She didn't tell me about the following incident until we had a two-hour talk when she was 88, shortly before she passed in 2014. That was twenty-five years to the day after my Dad died. It was a story that my father forbade her from telling me while he was alive. I am glad she waited, as I still have negative thoughts about doing something rash.

### Background

The most common way to get an appointment to any service academy is through a Senator or Congressperson. Most of those representatives of the people award the appointment without expecting anything in return. However, some use their appointment power to gain something that benefits them. My Dad was a victim of one of those corrupt people and sacrificed his career progression as a result.

Here's what happened. In 1964, my grades needed to be better than other candidates to get a competitive appointment to West Point. Since it had been my lifelong dream to go to my father's alma mater, he helped me get a first alternate appointment from a U.S. Congressman in Tennessee. Because the person who got the principal appointment could not pass the physical, I was given the appointment as the first alternate.

I met that Congressman shortly after that but never heard from him again, even at graduation. Personally, I thought that might be unusual, but I wasn't sure. So, I didn't pursue the issue with my father.

My mom told me that after I had entered the Academy, the congressman spoke with my Dad while he was the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) Nashville District Engineer. The congressman insisted that my father hire a person to work directly for him, but the employee would never show up. The employee could not be fired, and his paycheck would go into a special bank account. Of course, Colonel Jesse Leroy Fishback, USMA June 1943, refused to hire a 'ghost' employee.

Colonel Fishback was recommended for promotion to general not once but three times during the four years I attended West Point. However, Congress must approve all recommendations for flag officers, i.e., Generals and Admirals. Each time, my father failed to be approved by Congress. I believe the record would show that the corrupt congressman blacklisted Dad's appointment.

### **Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** There are negative consequences for Serving with Integrity. Over time, my Dad learned his heavy penalty even though he thought he had handled the situation professionally and with integrity.

**LL #2:** There can be positive consequences for Serving with Integrity. My Dad prevented taxpayers from being ripped off. That was the positive part of having integrity.

**LL #3:** In my Dad's case, I don't know why he did not inform his boss in charge of the ACE Division that he reported to or informed the FBI.

**LL #4:** During your career, you may be tempted by influential people, who's ethics are far from yours who also know not to put the request in writing or have a third person overhear the request. Choose duty honor country, serve with integrity, do not lie cheat or steal nor tolerate others who do because those ethics are far better paths than choosing the easier wrong.

**LL #5:** When you are trying to get an Academy appointment, be aware that there may be sacrifices your parents are making, especially if one or both are officers.

### **Report to West Point in Two Days**

**Mark Goodell B-3 29106**

It was in the back of my mind from early childhood that I was supposed to go to West Point. In grade school, I remember, being taught how to use the public library, finding and being drawn to look through a picturesque book about the Academy, its cadets, and what went on there.

That attraction to West Point was a family thing. My grandfather wanted my father to go to West Point, and my father even participated in a "USMA prep school" program at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii which might have won him an appointment, but it did not happen. After the Pearl Harbor attack, my father volunteered and served in WW II as a Marine. After the war, my father went through life with enormous appreciation and respect for anyone who went to West Point. Years later, an older brother got a nomination to the Academy but not the appointment, and everyone was disappointed.

Then, one Saturday morning in the Fall of my last year of high school, my mother came into my bedroom and formally stated that it would mean a lot to my father if one of his sons went to West Point, and there was hope that I might be the son to do it.

So, in my senior year, I applied to my congressman for an appointment to West Point, but I failed to get nominated - though I did receive a nomination to Annapolis instead. Later that summer, I went through all of the testing for the USNA at Bremerton Naval Air Station near Seattle, Washington, though nothing came of it.

Again, my main challenge and hope remained to go to West Point. So, in 1964, I again applied to my congressman. This time I received a nomination for West Point. However, I did not win the appointment. Now, I had tried twice and failed.

In 1965, encouraged by my parents, I tried a third time. In the meantime, I continued working at a local factory and attending college, alternating between Oregon State and Portland State. Again, I got a nomination and went through all of the testing. But, as the year wore on, it became evident that nothing would come of it.

By 1966, the Vietnam War was building up, and I was uncertain about which way my life should be headed. I decided to join the Marine Corps. Early that summer, I was at the U.S. Armed Forces Induction Center in Portland, OR, waiting for the bus to the airport, where a few young men like myself would be flown to San Diego, CA, for Marine Corps Basic Training.

Suddenly, a Marine Sergeant, in perfect posture and in that typically very sharp Marine Corps dress uniform, walked in and said, "Where is Mr. Goodell?"

I responded, "Right here, Sir."

"Your congressman just called and said you are supposed to report to West Point the day after tomorrow."

This news was unexpected. I had resolved in my mind to become a Marine. I almost involuntarily said I wasn't sure if I would prefer to become a Marine.

Noting my hesitation, the Sergeant said in a very reflective tone, in which he was obviously doing his best to be helpful, "It seems to me that going to West Point would be an honor."

An evening or two earlier, there had been a big "Goodbye to Mark" family dinner because I was leaving to go into the Marines. Now, I was home again, headed to West Point. Then, with no real fanfare, I was on the airplane flying to West Point.

**Lesson Learned:** In life, we are **not** necessarily called to succeed. But we are called not to give up and to do our best. If success falls on someone else, so be it. But our task remains to persevere. That by itself seems like an important lesson.

But, to me, there is a more profound lesson, and it hearkens back to that Marine Sergeant's words, "It seems to me that going to West Point would be an honor." Getting an appointment to West Point is highly competitive. One wins the honor; his competitors do not. But, if going to West Point is an honor, what is to be made of it? The answer is: those who have received that honor should see themselves as being **ever called** to be concerned and watchful for the safety of our Nation. A sentiment in line with the purpose for which the Academy was founded.

## Elements of Success

Richard (Rich) Rutledge I-2 29243

Over my ten-year journey to secure my appointment to West Point, many variables contributed to my success. However, I discovered three crucial elements that proved to be constants throughout my professional life in achieving success when facing challenges that were not straightforward or spanned significant time.

- 1) Pursue your goal.
- 2) Leverage existing or procured relationships.
- 3) Focus on the mission, not the process.

My first recollection of wanting to go to West Point was in the second grade, triggered by Red Reeder's Clint Lane series of books presenting Cadet Lane's four-year journey at West Point. The historical number of West Pointers that impacted our country and the world was common news as I grew up. Then there were the exciting successes of Army Football and personalities like Bill Carpenter, the Lonesome End.

By the sixth grade, I was seriously pursuing an appointment. My life choices over the following six years all aimed at achieving that goal. Participation in athletics, student government, Eagle Scout, community service, selecting courses following the USMA admission catalog, and writing my Congressman were steps in pursuing my goal.

My father was a life insurance agent. He had had strong relations with influential people through business, friends, and church. He brought me into his circle of close acquaintances, and soon I felt I could call them friends. They counseled me, encouraged me, and, as time grew closer, supported me with letters of recommendation that, no doubt, influenced my Congressman. I clearly saw the value in relationships.

My mission in high school during junior and senior years was to get into West Point. I was singularly focused on receiving an appointment to USMA and, during the process, did not apply to any other college or university. Risky, perhaps, as I remember my dad asking me, "What if you don't get in?" I replied, "I guess I will go to Texas Tech" in my hometown. But I was not distracted from the mission. In April of 1966, I received a letter from my Congressman congratulating me on receiving an appointment to West Point with the Class of 1970.

**Lesson Learned:** Throughout my life, the elements of goal focus, relationships, and mission above process continued to be valuable in my successes.



## **Example Citizen Sailors and Soldiers**

**Tim Carman B-1 29293**

War is not a good thing. The lessons that my grandparents, parents, and I learned are common to all people who have faced and endured wars. Our families (Johnson & Carman) were tempered by the Mexican Expedition, two horrible world wars, the Cold War, the Korean War, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The lessons I learned came mainly from the actions of the men in my family, as well as from what our grandmothers and my mom told us children.

### **Grandpas' Wars**

My father (Bob Carman) and his father (grandfather Max Carman) were citizen sailors, while my maternal grandfather (grandpa George Johnson) was a citizen soldier.

Grandpa George never volunteered information, but he would answer my questions and let me see his wound. That's how I learned about his two engagements serving under "Black Jack" Pershing during the 1916 Mexican Punitive Expedition and later in WWI, known as the "War to End All Wars."

My grandmother told me how he ran away from the farm in Wisconsin three times and went to the recruiting station in Chicago, Illinois, to enlist by lying that he was older than 15. The first two attempts were foiled by his uncle, who caught up with him in Chicago and "took him back by his ear" to work on the farm. His successful third attempt found him in Columbus, New Mexico.



Somewhere in Mexico or France, L to R,  
Unknown Soldier, Unknown Soldier, George Johnson  
(Seated in Chair) Regular Army

Years later, my sisters and I would alternate summers at our paternal grandpa Carman's place in San Jose and then at our maternal Grandpa George's place in North Hollywood. Grandpa George was working at Librascope in Glendale, CA. I was, and remain, fascinated with his going from chasing Poncho Villa as a foot soldier to coming home, teaching himself trigonometry (my grandmother's claim), and becoming a machinist.

Another claim by my maternal grandmother was that Grampa George turned down an appointment to West Point. I believe it. He wanted to get back to work. After giving up high school to fight in Mexico, he had no desire to stay in the Army, where he was busted twice to buck private for brawling. However, he was redeemed, along with his fellow soldiers, in the battles in France.

One day he came home in North Hollywood and gave me a tiny piece of aluminum. It was a rejected part of NASA's Lunar Module. I've since lost the part, but I can't get over his path through life.

Long after Grandpa George from Wisconsin passed away, Grandma told us about his involvement with a top-secret project he had never mentioned. After WW II began,

he went to New Mexico again to work on parts for nuclear bombs during the Manhattan Project. Bombs that were subsequently dropped on Japan that helped end WW II.

## Dad's Wars

My father (Bob Carman) didn't tell me much about his fighting during WW II or being called back to Navy service in 1950 when the fighting broke out in Korea. What I do know was what his WW II shipmates told us, at their reunions, about their service with him on the USS Bancroft. It was the only tin can destroyer that survived among those that sailed from California for Attu Island to take it back from the Japanese. Later, the Bancroft sailed into Manilla harbor to help liberate the Philippine people.



Lake Tahoe 1950. Dad was at San Pedro to ship out to Korea, Family (Soil Conservation Service Hiding Them!), From L to R, Pam, Mom, Tim

## Mom's Wars

My heart goes out to my mother, who taught us about my granddads' and dad's wartime experiences. I've always been amazed at how strong she was, trying to comfort her children while holding in the fright and sadness of knowing her husband was going off to unknown danger.

The first time she suffered those feelings was in WW II when Dad shipped out from California and later fought in the Battle of Attu Island in the North Pacific. The Second time those feelings arose was in 1950 when the Navy ordered Dad to report to San Pedro,

California, for possible duty during the Korean War. However, he wasn't recalled and returned home to his civilian job with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

I witnessed the third time, one day in October 1962. Phoenix was booming and having difficulty keeping up with the explosion of new high school and college students. When it came time to start our freshman year, our high school was not completed, and we had to share the campus at Carl Hayden High in southwest Phoenix.

Classes started at five and ended around noon and sport practices started after lunch. Since there was no locker room space for first-year football players, after practice, I walked the half mile to our house carrying books, pads, and uniform.

After entering our home, I immediately knew something was very wrong. My mother had been crying. Holding back tears, she sat me down and told me that my father was at Sky Harbor Airport, on the runway, in his plane. The Arizona Air Guard, commanded by Major General Goldwater, had been ordered to be ready to take off and fly to Florida. Though difficult for her, she told me Dad might have to go to war because of the Cuban Missile Crisis between America and the Soviet Union.

It registered in me that I might not see my dad again.

## My War

Because of my parents' values and upbringing, I decided to join the military by attending one of the military academies. My father wanted me to apply to the Air Force. I have to confess that I wanted to follow him and Grandpa Max Carman, a WWI naval officer, into the Navy and tried. However, West Point was the only service academy accepting candidates with eyes correctable to twenty-twenty.

Four years later, my parents and Grandpa Johnson were at our West Point Class of 1970 graduation and listened to Vice President Agnew's speech. Even my little sister remembers that day because her grandpa had her on his shoulders so she could see us on the field.

Later, in 1971-1973, when I was a Lieutenant during the Cold War, that scene with my Mom in West Phoenix came back to me quite often. Especially when the balloon went up, and I had to race my weapons platoon out to our defensive position in the woods on the edge of Roßfeld, Germany.

After my platoon had the mortars and 105mm anti-tank recoilless rifles set up, I could usually see my wife, Joan, standing with my sister-in-law and our daughter on the balcony of our home off post. So close that I could almost reach out and hold them. During those

drills, I knew that Joan, just like my mom, was worried that the shooting would start this time.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ❖ To a woman, my two grandmothers (Lucy Johnson and Louise Carman), my mom (Phyllis Carman), and my wife Joan hated war. They hated watching their spouse leave for war while not knowing what type of combat he would suffer, if he would be wounded, or if he would ever return.
  
- ❖ I know all the arguments for the current no-draft policy. But my grandfathers and father firmly believed it was the duty of all citizens to serve their country in some way. Because of those three combat veterans, I understood that our country should always have a draft of ordinary citizens. So, I think like my fathers did. If you love what this nation stands for, you need to be willing to defend it.
  
- ❖ Gratefully, each of the two infantry platoons I commanded were nearly all draftees, and they were fine soldiers. However, later, when I commanded a Military Police Detachment, I started missing what the drafted troops brought to the cause of defending the United States of America. Citizens who would hold the professionals honest.

So, as Sean Connery's character (Jimmy) said in the movie *The Untouchables*, "Here endeth the lesson."

### **Fight For What You Want**

**Thomas Dockery C-4 29387**

During my Junior year at Tuscaloosa High School, I was sitting at my desk at the start of my math class when a fellow student, Woody Hinton, a center on our football team, came in. He announced to the class that he was going to West Point. It was a done deal, and his father had helped him make the arrangements. I noticed that all the girls thought this was fantastic.

What I knew about West Point at the time was that it was a prestigious military school that I had watched for years on the TV show “The Long Gray Line.” As far as military experience in my family, my brother Rusty had received a full ROTC scholarship to the University of Alabama and was on the rifle team there. Also in Alabama were my uncle, Fred Abt, who lived in Cullman and was in the Army Reserves, and another uncle, B.B. Hughes, who had served as a chaplain in the Marine Corps.

When I got home from school, I talked to my father about what happened during school that day, mainly Woody talking about attending West Point. My dad knew Woody, and we both thought this was great for him. Then, my dad told me I could go to West Point, too, if I wanted. He explained that he had had an appointment to the Naval Academy, but his dad had passed away about the same time forcing him to stay and work on the farm. Dad urged me to make an appointment to talk with Mr. McCray, the secretary for our Congressional Representative, Armistead Seldon. The next day, I called and made an appointment.

I was at ease with Mr. McCray since he was the father of my classmate, Mike McCray. Mike and I had spent many summers playing sports together. I signed up for the appointment the day I met with Mr. McCray. Then I forgot about it because I planned to attend Samford University in Birmingham to play football and study Christian ministries.

In the spring of 1966, the appointments were announced. Sure enough, Woody had the appointment, and I was named as the first alternate.

To complete the appointment process, Woody’s father took Woody and me to Ft. Benning, GA, to take three major tests needed for final acceptance: the standardized college admissions test (SAT), a physical test, and a medical evaluation.

About two weeks later, I learned that Woody had failed the scholastic aptitude test (SAT), and I had failed the PT Test. What?! How could this be? I had played three years of high school baseball and football and thought I had done very well on the PT Test. So once again, after talking to my father, I went to the local Western Union telegraph office and sent a “To Whom it May Concern” telegram to the admissions office at West Point that stated, “I’m confident that I have done as well or better than anyone who has taken the PT test and if I have failed, everyone else must have failed, as well.”

This self-assuredness must have struck a chord with someone in admissions. Two weeks later, I received a telegram asking me to come to West Point on 1 June to be retested. At age eighteen, I flew on an airplane for the first time. After it landed at LaGuardia Airport, I somehow found the White Bus Line to the Thayer Hotel adjacent to West Point to be tested the next day.

The following day, I joined a group of applicants tested at the gym and then sent home. Within the week, I received another telegram that told me to report to the United States Military Academy at West Point on 1 July 1966. And the rest is history!

**Lesson Learned:** It is okay to fight for the things you really want! A lesson I have carried with me all of my life!

## Category: Novice Judgment

### Hooky

Guillermo (Willie) Chavez E-3 29163

My senior year at Jefferson High School in El Paso, Texas, in 1965 was one of the most exciting years of my life. It was also excellent preparation for West Point. For many reasons, at that point in my life, I felt absolutely invincible, unstoppable, unflappable, and as confident as I have ever felt.

My friendship with juniors Fernando and Checo was at its absolute peak. We had done all sorts of things together for three or four years, and we were as close as ever. We were like young bulls looking for matadors to gore and heifers to adore. We all enjoyed strong reputations in our communities and at school, and we were chomping at the bit to get on with the rest of our lives. We had participated in the international exchange program called *Crossroads of the Americas* the previous year; we also campaigned together for student body offices — although we lost, we bonded immensely.

As a result, we could date just about any girl in the city; we had jobs or planned to attend college in September. And even though none of us owned a car, we could enjoy almost unlimited use of someone else's automobile for whatever purposes we desired simply because everyone trusted us so much. We were on a roll!

So, around 15 January, we were living high with great confidence. We were so cocky that every so often, we would play hooky. On that particular day, Fernando had somehow obtained the use of a late-model Mercedes Benz from one of his uncles who was visiting from Mexico City. Fernando suggested we leave school at around eleven that morning and drive to Juarez, Mexico, for a leisurely macho-type lunch.

Here's the way crossing the border worked in those days. If you had applied for and received permanent residence status, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) would issue you a laminated green wallet-sized card with your picture. With that card, you could enter the United States without any complications. On the other hand, the process was incredibly simple if you were an American citizen. An American citizen returning from Mexico to the United States simply had to "declare" his or her citizenship. For example, when the INS officer would inquire about one's citizenship, one would merely state "American" or "United States". Then, the INS officer would permit entry. Of the three of us, I was the only U.S. citizen, and Checo and Fernando were permanent resident green card holders.



1965 Texas-Mexico Crossing Site - Photo courtesy of pinterest.com

Fernando always carried his green card in his wallet. However, since he had only suggested that morning that we play hooky, one major complication arose. Since Checo had not planned to cross the border that morning, he had not brought his green card to school. We contemplated the risks of Checo crossing into Mexico without his green card and decided that we would nevertheless go to Juarez. With bravado, we felt confident that Checo could fake his way through the American immigration screeners on our way back.

We laid out our plan: upon re-entry, all three of us would declare in our most Mexican-accent-free English that we were U.S. citizens. Since we were all perfectly fluent in English and did not otherwise precisely fit the then-current profile of illegal aliens, we thought that the odds were almost 100 percent that we would succeed in getting through. So, we got into the car and drove into Mexico for a well-deserved break.



After consuming generous portions of Mexican food and beer, we headed back to El Paso. As we approached the border crossing from Mexico, we discussed the situation again to ensure everyone knew what to do. The three of us agreed there would be no difficulty except possibly with Checo. He was extremely nervous. To calm him, we coached him carefully and repeatedly. We told him to remain absolutely quiet except when he was asked to declare his citizenship. He was to reply "American" and then say absolutely nothing afterward. We expected that we would be treated as ordinary American citizens returning from Mexico. We even rehearsed the process three or four times as we approached the border.

As has always been the case, a long line of cars waiting to cross. From a distance, we could see that each inspection by the INS officer was engaging in more dialogue than normal with the cars to our front. We also wondered why the INS officer had a pack of letter-sized white cards in his hands, but we did not become concerned about getting through without incident.

Finally, Fernando drove the Mercedes into the portal, and the INS officer looked into the car, noted the three of us through the opened window, and asked us to declare our citizenship. Fernando responded by crisply saying, "American." I was riding shotgun and responded with, "American, sir!" (I was a member of the El Paso ROTC high command.) Finally, the inspector turned to the back seat where Checo was sitting. Checo responded perfectly according to our plan by saying, "American." I stared directly ahead. A tiny smile formed on my lips because I sensed we were about to enjoy the benefits of proper prior planning and complete our deception.

The INS officer stepped backward, nodded, fingered the deck of white cards in his hands, and waved us through. Just as Fernando's foot moved from the brake and settled cautiously on the accelerator, Checo suddenly leaned toward the window and blurted out at the INS officer, "Excuse me, but what are those cards you are holding?" The officer replied, "These are Alien Registration cards. All aliens must fill one out every January. Do you need one?" At that moment, the Mercedes came to a full stop. The tiny smile vanished from my face; beads of sweat started forming on my brow. Nevertheless, I remained calm, staring straight ahead, wondering how Checo would respond.

Checo, now flush and flying high with confidence, cheerfully responded, "I sure do." Whereupon the officer tilted his chin quizzically to his right, frowned at Checo, and asked, "Didn't you say you were an American citizen?" Instantly, Checo's confidence departed. He hesitated, leaned back away from the window, and stuttered something unintelligible but thickly Mexican-accented. The officer then stuck his head into the back window and

said, "I beg your pardon?" In a stunning recapture of control and momentum, Checo calmly and confidently said: "I said it's for my mother."

The inspector played a bit more with the cards in his hands, then looked from side to side. He finally looked directly at Fernando and said, "Please pull over to the side. We need to talk to you a bit more." I felt crushed. I was not worried about myself or Fernando, who could pull out his green card. I was concerned about Checo. I knew that if they gave him enough opportunity, he would effectively paint himself into a corner, be positively identified as an illegal alien, and get deported to Mexico forever.

Once we pulled off to the side, another INS officer came to us and asked us to please step out of the car. Once we were outside the vehicle, the officer asked Fernando to open the trunk of the Mercedes. Fernando promptly complied or at least attempted to do so. He turned the key in the lock, but the trunk did not open. Then I noticed Fernando's brow was becoming all sweaty. He attempted over and over to open the trunk but could not get the key to work. As he was doing this, the officer turned to Checo and asked him a bunch of questions. Fortunately, Checo had fully regained his old form and confidence and coolly responded to all the questions in ways that satisfied the officer. Eventually, the officer appeared convinced with Checo's explanation and handed him one of the white Alien Registration cards "for his mother."

The inspector then turned his attention to Fernando, who could not get trunk still to open. I realized that we had no idea what was in the trunk. What if Fernando's uncle had left a gun there or some marijuana or a case of liquor?

Standing off to one side watching all this, I started rehearsing in my mind the story I would tell if the officers decided to handcuff Fernando and detain him. I would defend Fernando and Checo by vouching for their reputations, integrity, honor, and their academic status. I would tell the officer that I was intimately familiar with the families of both of my friends and that they were all upstanding, respectable members of the El Paso community. I would explain how Fernando had just run for student body president, and Checo had run for Assembly Manager, and how I had been the campaign manager for their campaigns. I would also explain how we had participated in the *Crossroads of the Americas* program the previous summer, which had done much to promote friendly relations between Mexico and the United States. As I continued my private rehearsal, the trunk of the Mercedes popped open.

Inside the trunk of the Mercedes was nothing more than a spare tire and jack. The officer looked at Fernando, directed him to close the trunk, and told us to wait in the car. He then departed. We watched the officer do nothing that seemed to be related to our

situation, yet he didn't come back to see us for at least an hour. In the meantime, we sat in the car not knowing what would happen.

Finally, well into the afternoon, after literally hundreds of cars passed through the border back into the United States, the officer returned. He told us two things: First, we were free to enter the United States. Second, he said, "Don't let me catch you playing hooky again!"

Enthusiastically, each of us nodded acknowledgement of his warning as we slowly pulled away from the inspection portal, heading back home into the good old US of A. I'll never forget that gut-wrenching experience and how hard we laughed as we drove home. We all knew we had dodged a bullet, especially Checo, and felt very relieved.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ Bravado can be a form of false security that can seduce you into trouble.
- ✓ Inexperienced comrades may fail to follow best-laid plans.
- ✓ Laughter is one of the best ways to release pent-up tension.

## **Know What Counts**

### **Thomas Dockery C-4 29387**

Toward the end of my junior year at Tuscaloosa High School, it became time to hold class elections for my senior year. On that particular day, I walked around looking down the halls filled with posters announcing who was running for different positions in the Student Government Association (SGA).

That afternoon, after I got home from school, my older sister Donna had several of her friends at our house, which had turned into the usual place to go. Donna and her friends had seen the posters as well. They were seniors and had decided that I should run for Student Council President.

Although I only had three weeks to register, enlist supporters, and prepare a speech, with their encouragement, I decided to give it a try. I knew the other candidates: Harry Adams, a member of the Honor Society; George Harris, a member of the Honor Society and manager of the football and basketball teams; and finally, Jim Langford, Honor Society, and Junior Class President. For sure their speeches would be well-written and related to the SGA, and what they wanted to accomplish for the school.

When “speech day” arrived, I got to school early, as usual, but I also brought my Dad’s Sun-Faced Gibson Guitar. I put it behind the curtain behind my candidate chair labeled with my name, fourth in the row because I entered the race last.

The auditorium was energized - full of members of all classes, teachers, and parents who could attend. Unfortunately, my parents could not stay. My Dad had his shop, Eddie’s Electric Motor Service, to open, and my mom was serving as the First Window Teller at the First National Bank in Tuscaloosa.

When it was time for the speeches, the other candidates walked onto the stage one at a time and gave their winded promise speeches. Meanwhile, I checked behind the curtain to ensure my guitar was still there. When it was my turn to present my case, Donna, my sister and campaign manager, gave a rousing candidate speech highlighting my participation in the Mixed Chorus, being a letterman in football, playing baseball, and being a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

She then yells, “COME ON OUT HERE BABY BROTHER!” When I pulled the guitar from behind the curtain, the crowd went wild, clapping and yelling! After they quieted, I went to the microphone and sang my short “to the point speech” to the tune of *The Long Black Veil* by Johnny Cash. I could only play three chords on my guitar: C, G, & F. My singing speech went like this:

“Ten days ago, I decided to run,  
Some folks told me it would be a lot of Fun.  
Fun it has been, hard work too!

Now it’s time to vote, and I’ll leave it up to you!  
Your vote I will need if I am to win,  
Against good boys like Harry, George, and Jim!”

Thank you for your help and your VOTE!”

By the end of third period, all the votes had been tallied in each homeroom and brought to the main office. Those three chords did it! I won without a runoff!

**Lesson Learned:** It's not how much I knew, but WHAT I knew was IMPORTANT. Thank you, Dad, for teaching me the three Chords!

## Chapter 2 — Our Academy Challenges



These lessons emerged at the Academy while preparing to be good officers for our country and the men and women we would eventually lead.

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### Category: Flexibility

#### Judgment

John Epley F-2 29281

As plebes during Beast Barracks and later during the academic year, we were told to ‘Play the game.’ Which meant maintaining strict obedience to orders even if they contradicted what we had been ordered previously or sounded silly or stupid.

Good examples included squaring corners when walking alone. Ascending steps one at a time while running on the double. Or when my first detail squad leader told us to make our beds look a certain way, but the second detail squad leader told us a different way to make them look.

Rather than question the contradiction and risk of being berated for challenging an order, I learned to keep my plebe mouth shut!

**Lesson Learned:** Along the way, I learned to use good judgment to know when to bend the rules for others, and myself.

## Smile and Succeed

Robert (Mac) Love A-4 29000

The last thing my father, a recently-retired Chief Warrant Officer, said to me when dropping me off at West Point on 1 July 1966 to begin our class's 47-month experience was:

“Son, no matter what happens, keep your sense of humor.”

His words returned to me a short while later as I was standing at attention, staring straight ahead at a designated brick on the barrack wall, as ordered, waiting along with other new cadets-to-be for whatever the cadet cadre directed us to do next.

**Lesson Learned:** I recalled my father's words many times over the years as a cadet, an officer, and in the business world. It may be difficult to see the humor when a sweaty member of the cadre is hollering cadet jargon in your ear as you stare at a wall. But it's good to be able to find something to smile about in the absurdity of the situation.

## Rude Awakening

Bruce Robinson E-1 29379

West Point was not my happy place. It was my needed place. Arriving at West Point on a warm and sunny 1 July 1966, this lad of 17 years, one month, and two days soon learned that acceptance to The United States Military Academy did not equate to being aware of or prepared for the rigorous venture. Beginning with day 1 of “Beast Barracks” we were reduced to the common denominator of nothing and then slowly restored to basic human stature.

During new cadet training, we were evaluated for academic aptitude and physical ability in preparation for assignments to ability groups. I was deemed deficient in reading skills and swimming ability. I thought I could swim after summers of playing in Philadelphia's public pools and lessons at the YMCA and Boy Scout camp. I was wrong. During the initial swim test, I was flailing in the water and grasping for air before being rescued from the middle of the intramural pool by the lifeguard. Therefore, besides the hectic plebe schedule, I was assigned to remedial reading and the Rock Squad.

At the start of the academic year, I reported to the library's basement reading lab after class until I improved my reading speed and comprehension to an acceptable level. Such skill-building was essential for academic success and lifelong learning.

Swimming, along with boxing, wrestling, and gymnastics, was a core plebe physical training requirement. Swimming was not the recreational type but survival swimming. That is fully clothed with equipment, negotiating the water dragging stuff, a lap underwater, high-level blindfolded entry, and other absurd stuff. I flunked swimming and was assigned to remedial swimming, “rock squad for life”. The only way out was to pass the survival swimming requirements as a graduation prerequisite. I protested that I could not float. My body was rock-like, nonbuoyant, naturally prone to sinking.

I was told, “Robinson, you will have to keep stroking.” So, during non-intramural afternoons, I was in the pool. On weekends, I was in the pool, surrounded by little kids swimming like fish. On holidays I was in the pool.

During my yearling year at Camp Buckner, I was in the water. The swimming instructor, Lt. Parker, grew tired of seeing me and likewise, I was tired of him, barking at me. Finally, I met the swimming requirements sometime in the winter that year. I was down to the last event, the underwater swim, and promised myself that I would not surface until touching the far wall, and if I drowned in the process, it would be on the conscience of Lt. Parker. I took a deep breath, dropped underwater, kicked off the wall and vigorously stroked like a porpoise escaping from a shark. I passed the swim test and was paroled from the Rock Squad. Incidentally, much later in life, while on Waikiki Beach, I leaned back in the ocean and discovered I could float in the Pacific Ocean.

Swimming, our body’s most thorough workout, wore me out completely. I was forever exhausted, sleep-deprived, and sometimes inattentive in class. Such behavior manifested itself one day in plebe math. I was at the blackboard without a clue as to how to solve an assigned problem when the instructor asked why I did not ask for help. I replied that I was so lost that I did not know where to start. That afternoon, I was summoned to the Tac Officer’s office and assigned a math tutor. My tutor was the intimidating Victor Garcia, Company F-1, academy heavyweight boxing contender. As I timidly negotiated the hallways of plebe Company F-1 to report to Mr. Garcia’s room for instruction, I promised myself that if I passed plebe math, I would ask for help at the earliest sign of trouble. Victor Garcia’s effective tutoring drilled me into grasping the basics of calculus and building upon them. After that, I had no significant academic challenges, keeping in mind the essentials of mastering the basics and building thereupon.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ Sinking or floating in life is a situational thing.
- ✓ Floating in life requires determination not to give up, hard work, and improving basic skills.



- ✓ The Academy's physical and academic skill requirements were valid and contributed to me graduating four years later.
- ✓ Success in all endeavors requires teamwork.

### **Importance of Trust**

**Peter McCall H-3 29254**

An important lesson I learned at West Point significantly affected me, particularly, my trust in individuals and teams and their trust in me.

That learning happened during the summer of 1966 during the first two months of Academy life, known as Beast Barracks. It mainly emerged with my two roommates and, to a lesser extent, between myself and my fellow squad members.

I played multiple sports in high school, as did most cadets. So, I had already been exposed to developing "team spirit" and "teamwork". However, during Beast Barracks, these lessons were much more intensely reinforced.

Upon reflection, that reinforcement seemed to be orchestrated on purpose by the Upper-Class Leadership staff who coordinated the day-to-day activities during Beast. It was done intentionally to encourage us to develop high trust in each other.

Why was this important? Trust is the foundation for effective teamwork and leadership. To succeed in the stressful environment at West Point required a set of skills to prepare us for our future military leadership roles and the life situations we would face.

I learned that to truly depend on my roommates, and they on me, the foundation of trust between us had to be quickly established. I grew to trust that they "had my back" and that we could depend on each other no matter what. Without that level of trust, I (we) would have been set up for failure.

**Lesson Learned:** Since then, the critical and essential nature of establishing trust in all my relationships has helped me throughout my life, both in the military as well as outside the military.

### **More than Mottos**

**Chris Wittmayer I-3 28898**

We graduated from West Point on 3 June 1970. Our class motto is "Serve with Integrity.

To me, “Serve” means live a life of service to others while “Integrity” means be honest, be solid.

**Lesson Learned:** Serve with Integrity is more than a motto. It is a guide for how to live your life. It has been for me. I recommend it to all graduates.

Each Sunday, we would recite the Cadet Prayer at what was then mandatory chapel attendance. Whether religious or not, I’m sure that words of the Cadet Prayer resonate across the decades for many graduates. Especially the sentence, “Make us choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be content with a half true when the whole can be won.”

**Lesson Learned:** “To do the right thing” is a guide for how to live your life



Protestant Cadet Chapel



Catholic Chapel



Jewish Cadet Chapel

### **Trusting Oneself**

**Joseph (Bobby Joe) Faraguna I-1 28867**

I had just turned seventeen a few months before I arrived at West Point from Brooklyn, New York. In comparison with other new cadets, I was considerably younger. As one with God-given talent who had excelled in Catholic School and Brooklyn Technical High School, I put considerable pressure on myself to achieve.

What I did not realize then (and didn't appreciate until years later) was the stiff competition I would face from the other young men comprising the Class of 1970. First of all, most were not as young as I was. Some had a year or two of military service or college. Some of their fathers were Army officers, which provided them the opportunity to grow up as Army brats. Or they had the good fortune of attending the Army's USMA Prep school, where they had studied academics, military structure, and discipline the year before. All of these classmates seemed to be far better prepared to face the rigors of new cadet Beast Barracks than me!

Furthermore, most were wiser, having experienced more than my seventeen years. Some as much as three years more. So, even now, in 2023, at age seventy-four, as I write these memories of my life lesson, some classmates are already seventy-seven. Seventy-four compared to seventy-seven may not seem like a big deal today. But as a teen in 1966, those three years comprised a significant difference, making it more difficult for a younger boy to love, guard, and appreciate one's dignity.

During that 1966 Beast Barracks, there were several examples of my unpreparedness and the challenge to accept myself. One was on the rifle range. I had never held a weapon. It should not have surprised me when I struggled on the firing line.



M-14 Military Rifle Issued to U.S. Army Soldiers in 1970

Shooting poorly during the practice rounds made my squad leader and roommates concerned, as I was! By nature, I wanted to excel, but in reality, it was a struggle that seemed to bring with it more stress, more worry, and more challenge to accept and trusting myself no matter what was my M14 rifle score.

Then came the day of reckoning, the final test on the rifle range. But something strange happened in the process. Gone was the worry. Gone was the internal pressure. Present was an awareness that I was doing my best and that, as usual, I wanted to achieve well. I grabbed my rifle, shot at the moving targets, and, most importantly, accepted myself. “Let it be,” as the Beatles sang, became my mindset.

The result: I fired an expert score, the highest category for rifle qualification! Also, I realized I could be at loving ease with myself even if I did not achieve expert.

**Lesson Learned:** Although caring for others it’s important, I have learned that it is just as important to care for oneself!

As the gifted American transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: “I am born to this position; I must take it, and know that neither you nor I can help or hinder me. Surely, then, I need not fret myself to guard my own dignity.”

**Cadet In a Corner**

**John Cogbill G-4 28995**

Sometimes, the best lessons come out of the most unusual circumstances. My “life lesson” involves negotiating skills. After my active-duty service as an infantryman, I decided that becoming a lawyer might help feed my family and keep me settled in one place. The idea worked.

As a lawyer, I found the ability to negotiate was a great asset. Of course, I tried all the usual ways to learn this important skill. I went through the list of all the great books on negotiation, including Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*. They were generally helpful, but an experience from my plebe year at West Point was the best lesson of all.

It was in a plebe boxing class and handed down to me by the venerable soccer coach, Joe Palone. I was never sure whether Coach Palone taught boxing because he enjoyed it or if it was just part of his duties as a West Point coach. Whatever the case, we all listened and learned when he spoke. I liked Coach Palone and why not? He had plucked me from the Beast Barracks Corps Squad Tryouts and put me on the plebe soccer team as a “walk-on.”

Life was good — Corps Squad tables with unlimited food and no bracing. I viewed him as my savior from some of the darkest parts of the dismal life of a plebe at West Point — even a 4th Regiment plebe.

As I remember it, we boxed based on our weight. I was six feet tall and weighed about 140 pounds after Beast Barracks. Thus, I boxed against others who weighed about the same. Most of my opponents were much shorter than me. As you might expect, their reach was also a lot shorter. So, my skinny arms could reach farther and land more punches without receiving any return punches.

In one session, I boxed a much shorter friend with a shorter punch. In the ring, I was enjoying the control that I was raining down on his furrowed brow. I won the first two rounds. But I wanted more. Seeing that he had been staggered by some of my better punches, I decided to “go in for the kill.”

I maneuvered him into a corner with the left jabs and then pulled back my right hand to land the knockout punch. My classmate (and still my friend) saw what was happening, and his adrenalin kicked in. He came out of the corner with a flurry of punches and knocked me back on my heels. My head was spinning, and my eyes were wide open. The bell rang. The fight ended and, yes, I won. But the life lesson was yet to come.

Coach Palone pulled me aside as the session ended, and we all started for the locker room. “Son,” he said to me, “never put anybody in a corner unless you are sure you can finish him.” I never forget that advice.

**Lesson Learned:** Since then, I’ve never forgotten what can happen if you push too hard and do not allow some “way out” for an opponent to maneuver to a face-saving

position. So, in every negotiation as a lawyer (and even during yard sales), I work to achieve what my clients want and need without risking unnecessary animosity or damage to their position.

Thank you, Coach Joe Palone.

## Category: Poor Decision-Making

### Drinking and Writing

Richard (Dick or Beahmer) Beahm B-4 29056

Yearling English at the Academy taught me I needed to learn to write. I'll never forget a book report we had due in the second Semester. To my credit, I had already read the book, written my book report, and even turned it in early, hoping for a few extra credit points.

As we departed on a trip section to a baseball game at Yankee Stadium, my B-4 Company mate, Mac Plummer, remarked to me that he had not yet begun to read the book. It was a close game that went several extra innings, and because it went so long, we didn't even get to stay until it was over.

Unfortunately for Mac, he had way too many beers at the game. Still, he planned to read (skim) the book on the bus back from the game, write his book report over the weekend, and turn it in on Monday in English class.

Of course, it was no surprise that he went D on the paper, **BUT NOT** as D as I did! I never forget that.

**Lesson Learned:** I have known for quite some time that I am not a good writer, but I have some great stories to tell. I just need someone to help me write them!

### Accept Responsibility

Terry Johnson D-3 29347

I learned as a cadet the importance of accepting responsibility for yourself. Yearling year after the Army-Navy Game in Philadelphia, several of us wandered the halls of the Ben Franklin Hotel, discovering the bounty of several hospitality suites. I found gin martinis to be refreshing and filled with olives. Losing count, I also lost control of my senses and would not remember anything past a certain hour that evening.

My exploits, barely tempered by attending classmates and as told to me upon waking in Old South that Sunday, were scandalous—nothing to be proud of and completely unremembered. A Brigade Board subsequently awarded me the maximum slug possible: 132 demerits, six months confinement, and loss of Christmas leave. My sense of injustice, totally misguided, led me to return to the company Charge of Quarters to request to see the Company Commander.

I told him I planned to resign and asked to see our company tactical officer, Major Green. Later, marching up the stairs to Building 720, to the tac, I realized that, regardless of not remembering my unacceptable actions in Philadelphia, I had indeed earned my punishment. I would sleep in the bed I had made. Before reporting to Major Green, I changed my mind about quitting. When I told him I'd stay, he agreed to appeal the loss of leave before dismissing me.

My confinement began immediately, as did the punishment tours. I could not afford to get even one more demerit, or I would be dismissed from the Academy. So, I kept our room spotless and passed every rifle and uniform inspection before marching. I did get to go home for Christmas. The Gloom Period in 1968 would be particularly poignant to me.

January turned to February, and other than the Area, the gym, the Catholic Church, the Mess Hall, the Library, classes, and classic movies permitted to even confined cadets, I was truly slugged. My grades improved, but my roomies and other classmates seemed distant—disproving, disappointed, or put off by me toeing the line. I did a lot of praying and attended daily Mass at the Chapel frequently.

If I made it through February, it would be the halfway point. Walking the Area taxed our souls, especially in the dead of winter. Some of my fellow area birds became close friends as we played surreptitious games while dodging our watchers. Thanks, Jim Mowery!

Early in March, my knee got infected from a scrape on a gym mat, landing me in isolation in the Old Hospital. Our tac, Major Green, came to visit just before my discharge. When he arrived, I crawled off the bed, and he told me I'd better sit down.

“Could you stand some good news, Mr. Johnson?” he asked. “Based on the cadet chain of command, my observations and recommendation, and Colonel Haig’s endorsement, the Commandant has agreed to reduce your punishment by one-third. You are no longer in confinement, no longer required to march tours, and no longer on the

edge of dismissal for demerits. Congratulations, Mr. Johnson! Your perseverance and self-discipline have paid off. Colonel Haig wants to see you as soon as you can get to his office.”

I did not know such a reduction was even possible! Major Green’s words shook me even more than the Brigade Board’s announcement of my punishment. I limped up to Building 720, remembering that climb back in November when I was ready to quit.

I’d never been to the Regimental Tactical Officer’s office and never talked to Colonel Alexander Haig. Still reeling from the great news, I began to worry that the good colonel would lower the boom—“*reduced by a third, but...*”

“Sir, Cadet Johnson reporting to the Colonel as ordered!” I saluted, standing stiffly three feet in front of his desk.

Returning my salute, Colonel Haig stood up, came around the desk telling me to be at ease, and took my right hand, shaking it powerfully.

“I’m proud of you, Mr. Johnson. I got into some trouble myself as a cadet,” he added without elaborating. “Well done, son! I look forward to you becoming a Cadet Captain. Congratulations.”

I could not have been more stunned. Dismissed, I skimmed the floor leaving the building and floated down the steps to my one-time prison room in Old South.

I am not that proud of getting the slug reduced by a third, given the behavior that got me there in the first place. It included being out of uniform by losing my hat, opening a cab door while the taxi was still moving, assaulting a Marine Captain, and perhaps worse things I still don’t remember.

**Lesson learned:** I learned to take responsibility for my actions. It was a harsh lesson that needed relearning along the way. The corollary lesson was more subtle. In scripture, it reads, “Reap as you sow.” In retrospect, sticking it out and avoiding a single demerit over four months was sowing some good seeds. I was and will always be grateful to Major Green’s and Colonel Haig’s watchfulness and support that pulled me through.

And, no, I did not make Cadet Captain. Perhaps some saw me as a jailbird, ne’er-do-well. However, I have spent the ensuing years remembering that experience and being a better man.

**What Could Possibly Go Wrong?**

**Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207**



It is easy for a person to provide a life experience showing them as a hero. It is harder to reveal a major character flaw or performing poorly. That is why I'm reluctant to provide this lesson learned.

However, I know it comes with important lessons that can help company and field grade leaders better protect their soldiers and accomplish assigned missions. Plus, it was not taught to me at the Academy, at Ranger School, at the Command and General Staff College, at the Naval Post-Graduate School, at the Defense Systems Management College, nor by any senior officer I served with during my years in the Army. Because I believe it should be taught to West Point cadets and junior officers, I'm moving beyond my embarrassment to reveal this experience while I was a cadet.

### **Background**

To understand my motivations as a cadet, you need insight into how I reached the Academy. I came from a poor family. From five to ten years old, my brothers and I were latchkey kids. After my father remarried when I was ten, the woman he chose started physically disciplining me. Possibly, it was because I was a wild animal used to running free. Anyway, more than once, I went to school and the physical training instructor and my classmates saw black and blue bruises up and down my legs and on my arms.

At fourteen, while we were working in an orchard, she struck me hard with a hoe handle. I spun around with a pitchfork in my hands and told her with a cold voice, "That is the last time you will ever hit me." I believe that deadly threat, plus observations by neighbors of times I was knocked to the ground, and inputs from school teachers, led the County to become involved. The result: one night in September, my dad and the woman he had married dropped me off outside Juvenile Hall in Vancouver, Washington, and told me to "go inside". Thirty minutes later, a steel door slammed shut, locking me up like a criminal.

My luck changed for the better that night, though I didn't recognize it then. Fifty-one days later, on Halloween Eve, my really good social worker took me to a dairy farm and introduced me to my new foster parents. I never had any discipline problems with them. In bed that night, I swore a vow to myself. I would get out of being poor, get out of being a foster kid, go to college, and make something of myself.

The first thing I did after rejoining my freshman high school class was talk to a counselor about how to get into college. He suggested I also consider one of the military academies. That's when I learned that in America, I had a shot at attending West Point. It was a head-to-head competition. All it took was doing really well in high school, being physically fit, and being motivated to succeed.

No problem, I was hugely motivated! I joined the cross-country team and lettered the following year. I made the honor roll each year, and scored higher on my SAT scores. So, I submitted my application to the Congresswoman for our congressional district and came out number two on her list. That's when I became a LOSER! I wasn't as good as the #1 guy who accepted the appointment.

Luckily, the Army sent me a letter saying if I joined the Army, I would be sent to the United States Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS) at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. After basic training, I worked my butt off at the prep school and did even better on my SAT scores.

This time, I visited my Congresswoman at her office in Washington, D.C. After seeing her, I was confident I would be selected. The result: DOUBLE LOSER! Now, I'm number three on her list and headed for Vietnam as a private if I do not qualify for an appointment from the Army!

Hoorah! I was appointed. I will be allowed through the door of America's oldest and most respected military Academy. But before that, I volunteered to attend Airborne School and join the ranks of that elite force. So, on 1 July 1966, a "nobody" poor kid with steadfast determination to successfully take on whatever would be dished out to him, proudly marched across the Plain with a thousand other new cadets to join the Corps of Cadets. The Class of 1970 had arrived.

## Prelude To Screwing Up

At the Academy, we were taught to compete. That wasn't a tough sell since all of us had competed to get through the door. However, facing how smart and talented my classmates were was disturbing. Math whizzes like John Greenwalt and Chip Leonard excelled in advanced calculus, while I had difficulty spelling it. Steve Bagstad, who successfully tutored me through "juice" class, understood electricity while I thought it was magic. Physically competing was also a challenge with the likes of basketball star Mike Gyovai, football stars Gary Steel, Henry Andrzejczak, Tony Sobul, and John Norris, as well as cross-country speedster Nick Sebastian.

But, I tried to excel like my classmates when I could. One time was yearling summer when we were training at Camp Buckner. There was a water sports competition between all the companies. I volunteered to do the longest swim of the day. It was a half-mile out and back across Popolopen Lake. Before we jumped off the dock, I warned my nearest competitors to watch out for water snakes. Winning races sometimes requires being wily. I won for 2nd Regiment and for Company H-2! Being the best in our class that day was something I'm proud of — but not too grand to be remembered by anyone but me.

I was also impressed with the stories of great graduates like Generals Grant, Patton, and Eisenhower. But the tale of MacArthur masterminding how to remove the reveille cannon from Trophy Point and hoisting it onto the clock tower roof was the type of accomplishment I longed for. Recognition for doing something epic, something impressive, something no one else at the Academy had ever done, and something that would be remembered by my class and even graduates of other classes. Something with an added dash of danger would be even better.

## Screwing Up

Fast forward to May 1970, a month before graduation. I've successfully weathered nine years of challenges before and at the Academy and am running out of time to become a famous member of my class. Then it dawned on me. From the founding of West Point in 1802 until May 1970, I never heard or read about a cadet swimming from the shore of West Point across the Hudson River to Constitution Island and back. I'm going to take on the fourth-longest river in the United States, which links Albany to New York City. Brilliant!



Gap as seen from Constitution Island toward West Point's North Dock along the shoreline.

I had no fear or concern of making the two-thirds of a mile round trip across the waterway. Also, having watched the Hudson glide by for four years, lousy water conditions were not an issue since rough surface chop never appeared during the summer. Of course, there would be some current, but I would easily compensate for that by wearing a pair of swim fins. Plus, to avoid getting caught, I'd do it in the dark of night. That would force me to look more often to verify I stay on course to my planned landing point. On the

other hand, a nighttime swim brought the advantage of avoiding pleasure boats that routinely play around on the water in the daytime. But I would need at least three hours of darkness to get out and back.

Would I have the strength to swim farther than the Popolopen Lake race? Absolutely! I had completed that earlier swim without being exhausted. Since then, years of cross-country running and triathlon swimming have given me more endurance to pull this off. This never-been-done-before swim would be the capstone of going from nobody to somebody!

Two days later, I'm in the barracks before lights out, considering telling my roommates what I will do at 12:30 a.m. I hesitate for three reasons. First, what will they do except wait in the dark by the river, get nervous when I'm not back precisely on time, and then run off to the duty officer to help find me? That's a recipe for getting caught. Secondly, at the last minute, before crossing the line of departure, I don't want to put up with anyone trying to talk me out of what I want to do. Third, if I tell them and if the tactical officer makes a nighttime inspection and sees my bed is empty, he will ask my roommates, "Where's Mitchell?" Then, they can truthfully say they don't know, and they will not be in trouble.

At 12:30, wearing a swimsuit, under my sweatshirt and trousers, I leave my room carrying a towel and swim fins in a laundry bag. Half an hour later, I'm below the field house at the north dock. As planned, my eyes are fully adjusted to the darkness, allowing me to spot the black shape of the promontory I'm aiming for on Constitution Island. With no military police driving around, I undressed and dove, in only wearing my swim trunks and fins.

*Holy shit!* It's June, but the river feels like melted glacier water. Shocked, my scrotum instantly snapped into my body to survive. Realizing I had to avoid hyperthermia, I decided to generate more body heat and blood flow by swimming faster.

When I leave the U-shaped sheltered cove, the current drags me downstream, forcing me to aim upstream to compensate. That tactic doesn't stop me from drifting away from my swim line. Adjusting my aim more upstream, I stabilize my crossing path. Fighting the current slows my horizontal speed and forces me downstream from my planned landing on a sand beach. Too cold to swim upstream, I crawl onto Constitution Island, where large, jagged rocks and boulders have fallen into the water below the cliff they came from. Trying to get my legs and feet out of the water, I step onto the boulders. Several times, I nearly fall when my foot slips off a slimy surface.

*Damn it!*, I tell myself. *I'll never get back if I twist my leg or fall and break something. Then I'll get caught in the morning and probably won't graduate with the class.*

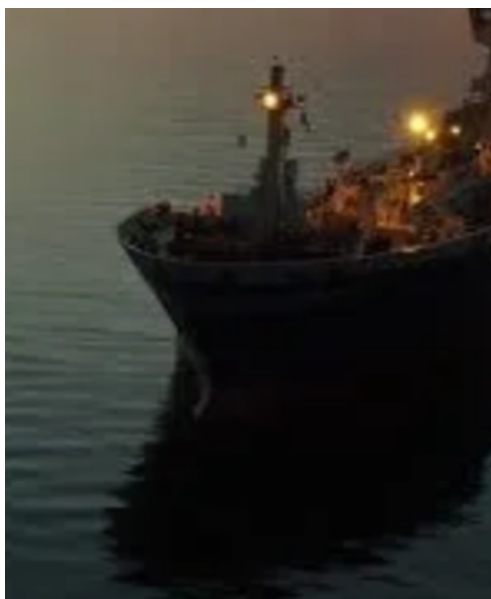
When I found a dry spot to stand on, I worked to drive away hyperthermia. I vigorously rubbed my legs and arms, then swung my arms in circles and did knee lifts. After thirty minutes, and not shaking anymore from chills, I told myself *Time to go back*.

It took willpower to force myself into the water because I knew the cold and the current were my enemies, and I was weaker now against their relentless attack. The easy, brilliant swim had disappeared into a physical and mental fight far more difficult now than the first swim leg. I knew I'd be swept downstream if I faltered in the river.

I focused only on churning stroke after stroke. Nearing the middle of the river, while my right arm came up and I breathed under it — I spotted a bright light.

*The cold is messing with my eyes.*

As my right arm came up again, the light was still there. I stopped stroking and floated while staring upstream. Several hundred yards away, I saw forty feet above the water, a bright light on the bow's peak of an ocean-going ship. *This is bad. I'm going to get run over or swamped by the nose wake.*



Then I shook my head. *There's no way*. But, to be sure, I turned my head to check what was downstream. Another light shone at me, headed my way. The second ocean freighter was about the same distance from me, having moved past the west point for which the Academy is named.

*I'll be sandwiched . . . slammed into the metal side of one of the ships. Go! . . . go! . . . go!*

I swam for my life, knowing that if the massive screws got me, no one would find my body. I went into surge speed. Instead of breathing every time my right arm came out of

the water, I did not breathe until the third right-side stroke. I believe I matched Olympic swimmer Mark Spitz's speed, who crushed me a year earlier during the swimming phase of a triathlon competition.

Once I felt the bow wave lift and push me from behind, I knew I would not be ran over. Floating, I sucked in deep breaths and watching the two dark dangers churn away. *I'm going to live! Yeah, baby!* I did a wet version of the happy dance, then finished swimming to the dock.

As I returned to the barracks exhausted, I considered what I had accomplished. Yes, it was a significant challenge; no other cadet had ever tried; it was dangerous, it took determination and strength to finish, and I did not get caught. But my bravado blinded me into making mistakes and not assessing potential risks before diving into the unknown. Also, my wanting to be somebody almost made me a dead body. Thus, my actions almost washed away nine years of striving just to get a shallow reward. That made me ashamed to tell anyone about my river adventure. Instead, I took a long hot shower and crawled into bed for a few hours of sleep before reveille.

The bottom line: that night's quest for praise demonstrated extremely poor judgment deserving of an Article 15 trial and punishment. Starting as an officer with that black mark on my record would have surely curtailed my hoped-for career.

Now, you know why I kept my mouth shut for so long.

### **Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** What brings respect and admiration is doing something for others rather than doing a mission for your own benefit or pride. An excellent example of doing something for others is our classmate Richard Beahm. During 31 years, as a Multiple sclerosis (MS) Bike teammate or leader, he collected and donated \$460,000 to the National MS Society to help find a cure for multiple sclerosis.

**LL #2:** I did not experience any training in all the schools I attended, explaining that **bravado can blind common sense**. Similarly, I missed being taught to be a **pessimist when you form your field order or operations plan**. Yes, I was told things would go wrong. However, I was not taught that in life-threatening situations, either to oneself or to others that you lead, you need to consider **what your embedded assumptions are in**

your primary plan and what you will do if they turn out wrong. You also need to **assess mission risks** and decide what action or contingency you'll implement if those risks become reality. Nor was I told that **hoping** something won't go wrong **isn't a mitigation** to that possibility. Bottom line: untested underlying assumptions can get you killed.

**LL #3:** Don't be lazy; gather reconnaissance information or use other available information sources before kicking off the real mission. For example, I assumed the river water would not be cold enough to cause hyperthermia when exposed for an extended period. Instead, I could have walked to the river's edge, stuck my arm in, and discovered the actual condition of my area of operations. I could have also gone to the Library ( We didn't have the Internet in 1970) and researched long-distance-swimming techniques like wearing a swimsuit to reduce heat loss, learning the average current speed in the river in the summer, or nighttime traffic on the Hudson River.

**LL #4:** Doing a practice run before the real mission reveals weaknesses in the plan of action. What could possibly go wrong with a plan you have crafted for a military mission? One thing can be that you really haven't prepared. I could have taken a test night swim. But oh no, not Ed. So, it didn't dawn on me that when the Hudson narrows going past the Academy, the current gets stronger.

**LL #5:** Adrenaline is your friend when you are about to die. Strength can return and keep you in the game or help you flee from danger if necessary. And that night, it was necessary for me.

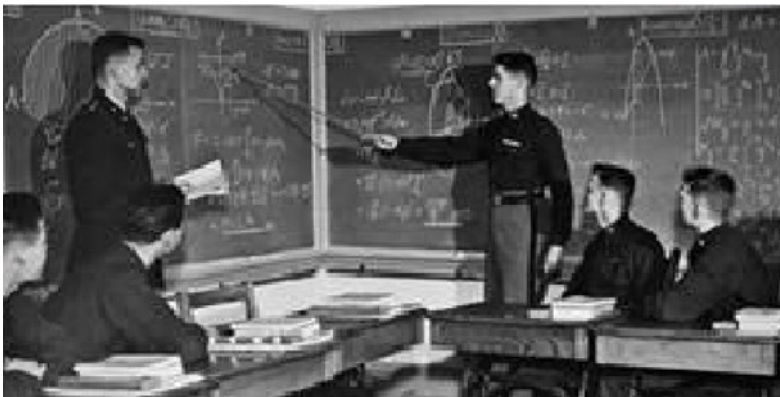
**LL #6:** Another definition of bravado is going stupid, and that does not impress anyone.

## Category: Stress Management

### Painful but Useful

Robert (Bob) Heaton C-2 29046

“Take boards” are the two words that struck fear in every Plebe’s heart while I was a cadet at West Point. Those words started heart-stopping times in Thayer Hall as I explained something I barely understood to classmates who barely understood what I was saying and to a professor who knew I had no idea what I was talking about.



Cadet presenting his solution - photo by westpoint.edu

Still, those uncomfortable times forced me to work on my public speaking and presentation skills, which would pay dividends in front of other groups, in the future.

The first time I exercised my sharply honed public speaking and presentation skills came during my first assignment in graduate school. You see, I went Air Force, and that military service wanted me to be an engineer since West Point was no longer an engineering school in 1970.

My task that day was to present my graduate student project to the people of the laboratory where I was seeking my Masters in Mechanical Engineering. My research and engineering efforts dealt with part of an instrumentation package for a 2.75-inch folding fin rocket to be launched into a tornado from under the wing of a Cessna 150. My snappy project title was *High Speed Response Humidity Sensor*.



Like at West Point, I did the math on presentation requirements, prepared the 35mm slides (less messy than a chalkboard), and stood before the other masters candidates and their professors. I expected a supportive educational environment as it was when we plebes took boards in the bowels of Thayer Hall.

Well, not so fast, young 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. Unknowingly, I had stepped into a faculty minefield. My project professor, holding only a master's degree, was in charge of scheduling lab time for the other more senior professors, who all had PhDs and did not always like his scheduling decisions. Quickly, I discerned that the professors delighted in piling on any of his degree candidates. On that morning, it was me.

Thanks to another skill learned at West Point, I moved through the presentation skillfully, fending off challenges to my work, and finished with little criticism.

For that success, I have to thank the fine people of the Third New Cadet Company who greeted us and started down the path of learning how to handle stress that first day in July 1966 when over a thousand young men arrived to join the Corps of Cadets as the Class of 1970. Those Ph.Ders had nothing on Mr. Ni, the Man in the Red Sash, whom I had the pleasure of meeting and then being yelled at for my inability to do anything right, including breathing improperly.

I also need to thank those fine men in my New Cadet company who hardened me and trained me to be quick-witted when under pressure. The civilian Ph.Ders paled compared to the cadre during the hot summer months of July and August. Toothpaste never tasted as good as it did those summer evenings after “dinner” (or lack thereof) in the mess hall.

These three skills: public speaking, working under pressure while being hazed, and quickly thinking how to answer tough or surprising questions, have often helped me in my career both in the Air Force and the civilian world.

For example, I was able to present an Air Force project (Emergency Life-Saving Instant Exit (ELSIE)), to an auditorium of nearly 2000 attendees during an Aerospace Medical Convention. Succinctly, I explained and substantiated the merit of the device designed to blow a hole in the side of an aircraft for an instant exit to save lives. Afterward, I had people comment that it was the best presentation of the day.

Another example of applying my cadet-learned skills was presenting critical sections of a source selection evaluation to a three-star general. Our evaluation team had prepared our colonel to do the presentation. But after my boss told the general that there was only one critical “show stopper” among all the evaluation criteria, he surprisingly said, “Captain Heaton will present this item today,” and then sat down.

No pressure, as the evaluation assessment I was suddenly forced to present would likely make or break the choice for the winning contractor. Plus, the general would be very interested in what I would say while simultaneously assessing how well the evaluation team had performed their job and the strengths and weaknesses of each contractor's approach.

**Lesson Learned:** Although stressful, "Take Boards" and "The Days" can successfully train a person to perform good public speaking while under pressure. For me, "The Days" is first on my list of two words that caused me the most stress at the Academy. "Sir, The Days, there are . . ." and the rest is history.

### **Survival Swimming**

**David White C-4 29200**

In the late 1960s, cadets in their first year at West Point had to pass four physical education classes: boxing, wrestling, gymnastics, and survival swimming. Each of these classes taught valuable skills and lessons, but for me, the most valuable class was survival swimming. Even though I had grown up in South Florida and spent a significant amount of time in and around the water, my swimming skills were rudimentary and certainly not the skill level required in the Army. Understandably, I was assigned to the "Rock Squad".

All training occurred in a large pool in the North Gymnasium. As I recall, the pool was about 14 feet deep at one end, and while it was less deep at the other end, it was still deeper than the height of the average cadet. The course required each cadet to successfully execute several challenging events specifically designed to develop confidence and skills for dealing with situations involving water that had challenged soldiers in previous wars.

We were taught several basic swimming methods: freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, sidestroke, and treading water. The treading water activity required the swimmer to tread water for a designated period of time. A "drown-proofing" activity involved learning how to remove either the uniform shirt or the trousers while treading water and making them into a float that could be used to remain afloat indefinitely. Another event required the individual to walk off the diving board at the deep end, while in uniform and holding a rifle at port arms. Once in the water, the individual was required to hold the rifle out of the water with one hand, and swim the length of the pool. Another event in the deep end, was to dive down the side wall, swim underwater across the pool, recover a brick, then return underwater, to come up next to the wall where you started and place the brick on

the floor next to the wall. All of this activity had to be accomplished using only a single breath.

The final event, simulated evacuating a sinking ship, had to be successfully performed to pass the entire course. Approximately 30 feet in the air above the center of the pool was a small, **sadistically** designed platform. It was barely large enough for a single person to stand upon, with small handles on either side at a height that an average-sized person could not stand up straight and hold the handles. Dangling below the platform into the water was a flexible ladder that cadets climbed and hung while awaiting their turn on the platform.

The test required cadets to swim in fatigue uniform to the pool's center, grab and climb the swaying ladder with other cadets on it until they could mount the platform. Once on the platform, the instructor would give the order to assume the "hook up" position. Compliance required the cadet to release the handles, stand erect, and place one hand over the mouth and nostrils with the heel of the hand cupped under the chin to hold the jaw in place. The other hand would firmly grasp the elbow of the arm that was holding the mouth and chin in position. Meanwhile, the ladder would swing, and the platform would jerk erratically while several cadets hung suspended below the platform, adding to the difficulty of not falling from the platform into the pool.

Upon the instructor's command, the cadet would step off the platform into midair and plummet into the pool below.

**Lesson Learned:** Without a doubt, cadet swimming taught me essential swimming and survival skills. However, more importantly, I learned the valuable lesson of staying calm and focused in a stressful situation. It taught me to remain focused and manage myself to complete the task at hand. Fortunately, I never had to use those swimming skills, but the more valuable lesson of staying calm has remained with me throughout my life.

### **B-Squad Leadership**

**Tom (Roz) Rozman A-3 29484**

**Robert Zollo I-1 29141**

Over a career engaged continuously in leading organizations, I have reflected on the impact of a leader's development in early leadership "laboratories." By this term, I mean opportunities we are presented with where we lead some activity of consequence, which contributes significantly to our development and growth as leaders. These situations can cover quite a range of venues. They may involve everything from leading some activity in

a scouting program to being assigned by a manager in a fast-food operation to lead a team on a shift.

At the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, such opportunities are extensive. They include:

- Corps chain of command assignments as cadet officers and non-commissioned officers in the last two years at the Academy.
- Two months, one summer conducting basic military training for the new incoming class.
- Two months, one summer conducting advanced military training for the new second-year class.
- Serving one month during the third or fourth summer in a lieutenant's capacity in a unit of the active Army.
- Four years of sustained participation in inter-collegiate varsity, junior varsity, or cadet company intramural athletic teams. It was mandatory at the Academy in the 1970s to be a member of a company intramural team unless medically excused or on a varsity Corps Squad.

In my case (Rozman), my alignment with the intercollegiate soccer program at West Point began during New Cadet Barracks Corps Squad (athletic) screening. I was screened for the soccer and wrestling squads. Because of my high school and freshman college soccer achievements, Coach Palone selected me as a mid-fielder on the Plebe (freshman) or "C-Squad" intercollegiate team. I was on the varsity "A-Squad" program for the following two years.

Outside of the soccer season, I was on my cadet company's water polo, wrestling, and lacrosse squads. One year, the company wrestling team placed as the double regimental and brigade champion.

During my last year as a cadet at the Academy in the spring of 1970, a different opportunity made a deep impression on me. For the Spring soccer season that year, only two first class cadets were selected from the varsity soccer team's ranks and offered the opportunity to administer and coach the junior varsity soccer program.



Company A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment Wrestling Team 1968

Famed varsity head soccer coach Joe Palone asked me and my friend Robert (Bob) Zollo to be the player coaches for the Academy's "B-Squad" junior varsity soccer team.

We soon learned that the program was relatively new and intended to extend the Academy's intercollegiate competitive athletic program with maximum cadet participation. It also created a deep bench of experienced soccer players for the "A Squad" varsity team.

We were told we would be responsible for the following:

- With guidance from Head Coach Palone, select the players for the coming season
- Organize, conduct, and officiate weekly practice sessions, including any necessary logistics, i.e., playing field coordination and equipment
- Coordinate the 8-game schedule with the Athletic office, then travel and conduct game trips to include interface and coordination with points of contact at the game schools
- Coach and develop players through regular instruction, practices, and performance feedback
- Develop collective team tactics, techniques, and procedures
- Provide game and player feedback to Coach Palone
- Perform required administration

Reality quickly set in. The program requirements placed significant responsibility and accountability on Bob and me. In effect, we would be operating full-time as a leader team for three months, commanding essentially a platoon-size unit with a defined and specific mission requiring several deployments and mission recovery. Of course, the ultimate objective was winning all or a high majority of the games. And even if the opponent ruled on the field, we would always play hard and, if short of victory, accept the decision with grace. Simultaneously, Bob and I would have to juggle our heavy academic load (primarily a four-year engineering program of 170 semester hours, 20-22 hours per semester) while ensuring program success.

At first, the challenge seemed risky with vast overkill. But we recognized that the program did something else. It gave two cadets a unique leadership experience before graduating and being commissioned as second lieutenants. So, we decided to accept the mission.

Soon, we discovered that we faced thoroughly-independent operations with public consequences. Not the least was the responsibility to maintain appropriate conduct among 20+ cadet soccer players deployed on game trips to colleges in southern Connecticut, southern New York, and northern New Jersey. Those aspects influenced a very different caste to our leadership role.

The potential for disaster rested heavily on Bob and I. The art would be meeting the program's intent, allowing team members reasonably good times but staying one step ahead of any temptation to get carried away that would embarrass the Academy or one or more cadets on the team.



The author as a "B Squad" Player/Coach during team practice at the U. S. Military Academy

### **Rozman’s Long Term Lessons Learned:**

I grew significantly in my confidence as a leader. Also, my “hands on leadership by example” skills were sharpened by being among those we led while experiencing the success or failure of our leadership on the field.

The player/coach program of. . . plan it, coordinate it, support it, do it, recover from it, and evaluate it turned out to be a powerful personal leadership mechanism.

My experience with the B-Squad Soccer Program at West Point proved exceptional. I came away from the experience with a sound appreciation of what such leadership training formats allowed. And, if leveraged well, how they can enhance the development of leaders in organizations.

Subsequently, often as an officer/commander and a civilian developing Virginia State Parks staff and Virginia Department of Labor and Industry staff, I applied the player/coach mechanism and got excellent results. Many beneficiaries of that training, matured into highly effective leaders, rising to senior Army and civilian leadership positions.



The “Army A” awarded to B-Squad player/coaches

### **Zollo’s Long Term Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ Coach Palone was a legendary coach and charismatic leader. Being asked by him to be one of the B-Squad coaches was an honor. The opportunity to learn coaching and tactics from him motivated me to expect excellence with the B-Squad team, military units I later commanded, and civilian industry teams.
- ✓ As an entrepreneur and business owner in the tech industry, I applied two things that Coach Palone impressed upon me:
  - First, regularly encourage your team members to succeed, and they will improve their performance.

- Secondly, persist through challenges and setbacks until you achieve your goals.

## Category: Judging Subordinates

### Drafted Lawyer, a True Citizen

Tom (Roz) Rozman A-3 29484

It was July 1968 and super-hot. That summer, I was temporarily assigned to an advanced infantry training battalion for three weeks of Army Orientation Training (AOT) at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Back then, AOT gave third-year West Point cadets the opportunity to perform platoon-level leadership and experience the life of an Army lieutenant in an active-duty unit.

After reporting to my unit, the company commander appointed me as his assistant training officer. Together with other lieutenants and sergeants, we worked the trainees through advanced infantry training challenges.

The temperature was in the upper 90s, and the humidity matched the temperature. So, our pouring sweat would not evaporate. Luckily, the trainees, nearing the end of their infantry training, were used to Louisiana's humid summer heat. That was a good thing, given most of them were headed to Vietnam in a few weeks.

My commander was also my officer mentor. So, I listened to his guidance and carefully applied it. But I learned the most from an enlisted man. And it had nothing to do with infantry operations.

One day, when the company deployed in a wet, swampy, bug-infested training area, we stopped training for the noon meal. During lunch, I engaged in conversation with one of the infantrymen. He was older than many fellow trainees, had a medium build, and was in good shape. Like many of the soldiers, he had been drafted.



The conversation went in the usual direction, each of us asking about the other's home, background—whatever seemed comfortable to discuss. The trainee was well-spoken and well-educated.

As the conversation warmed, both of us became comfortable with sharing information. Soon, I learned that the trainee was a lawyer who had recently finished law school. He had passed his bar exam almost simultaneously with receiving his draft notice.

I knew from several sources that the Army's Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps was short of attorneys. So, I mentioned that the trainee might want to consider applying for a direct commission as a JAG lawyer. Given the shortage of Army attorneys at the time, it was likely that the commissioning application would be successful.

Then, I encountered the most exceptional citizen and soldier I had ever met—based on spending my entire 21 ½ years growing up in Army communities and serving as an officer for the last three of those years.

In a reserved, mature, and low-key manner, the soldier informed me that he was aware of the direct commission opportunity. He said he had previously been approached about making such an application. The soldier stated that he disagreed with how the war was being fought. He added that he was from Chicago and had demonstrated against the war as a student.

Then, the trainee proceeded to say something I have never forgotten.

“But I am a citizen of the United States and an officer of the court. We are a nation that believes in the rule of law, and I swore to defend the Constitution in my enlistment oath. It is my duty as a citizen to serve when called. I will meet my duty, and I will serve honorably. If I return safely from my service and if the war has not ended, I will be back on the street protesting it.”

For perspective, at that time in America some young men refused to serve after receiving their draft notice, and suffered prosecution. Others crossed the border into Canada. The trainee's actions were different. It bespoke a sincere love of country and respect for duty despite strong disagreement with policy.

At first, I could not say anything. Whether I agreed with the trainee or not, his evident sincerity in what he was saying and the fact that he was near the end of his advanced infantry training and would likely be in Vietnam within the next month assigned to a rifle battalion made his comment worth pondering.

I reflected on the trainee's viewpoint based on my father's deployment to Vietnam in 1956, as had other family members in the following years. Some were drafted like he was. So, for 12 years, through direct and related family involvement, beyond what other

American families experienced, I gained a sense of the many-layered aspects of the war as it had developed. Plus, the trainee's comments were consistent with what I knew.

When the trainee finished speaking, I was in full respect of the man. I told him he was perhaps the best citizen I had ever known. Then, shook his hand and wished him Godspeed in his service and a safe return home.

As the noon meal ended, both of us returned to training. I never came across the trainee again, but I have often thought of his words and example of being a citizen soldier. But numerous times later, I shared the story of meeting the most sincere and principled person I had ever met. A man who displayed the very essence of what citizenship meant in a constitutional republic.

But the lawyer-soldier was not the only exceptional draftee I met during my Army career. As a lieutenant, I met others at Fort Hood, Texas and in Korea. For example, the one in Korea had just graduated from Middlebury College in Vermont when he received his draft notice. Subsequently, he became the last man drafted for the Vietnam War. Yet, he answered the call and served well in the platoon as one of its best soldiers. In fact, I never had one drafted soldier fail in all of the units I was assigned to.

From a leadership standpoint, these drafted soldiers taught me several important lessons.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** First, they were citizens who deserved my respect. True, that respect would be within the context of military duty, but the dignity of these citizen soldiers affirmed it. In response, they would reciprocate with loyal and dedicated service.

**LL #2:** Every drafted soldier had knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond their military training. And that experience could be applied to the unit if the leader took the time to learn who the men were and their capabilities. Many drafted soldiers had trade skills, advanced education, athletic ability, and creative abilities at levels that, if adequately accessed by leaders, could significantly leverage unit performance and mission success.

**LL #3:** When well led, those citizen soldiers would give good service. They would commit themselves to accomplishing the mission. And if their officers were successful leaders, the majority, if not all of these citizen soldiers, would return to civilian life the better for their service and become successful citizens.

**LL #4:** The private soldier at that noon meal in the field at Ft. Polk, Louisiana in 1968 made clear that he was a leader by example. That lawyer-soldier that I met decades ago set a very high standard for me to follow.

Many of the leadership lessons I learned from the drafted soldiers would translate to the soldiers of the volunteer army I was part of after the Vietnam War ended.

### **Chain of Command Integrity**

**Bruce Michalowski G1 28920**

During the first month of New Cadet Barracks in the Summer of 1968, I was an Assistant Squad Leader (Cow Year). I was responsible for leading the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Cadet Company in physical training (PT). During those sessions it was apparent to the Tactical Officer and to the company chain of command that five new cadets were unable to keep up with their classmates.

I was given the extra duty of bucking them up. With the help of two classmates, we constructed a circuit in the barracks where these failing newbies could get in shape. The stations included push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups. The plebe cadets would run from station to station, which were located on three different floors. After explaining to the new cadets that they needed the additional training so they would not fail out of the Academy, we supervised daily circuit training.

### **Complications**

One of the new cadets did not want to be at West Point. He openly declared he was only a New Cadet because his father wanted him to graduate from the Academy. After two weeks of the extra circuit work, he went on sick call. There, he told the doctor that three upperclassmen were “abusing” him.

We did a little yelling at times, but that was not what I would call abusive and was a common part of the new cadet experience.

Anyway, this kid’s dad was a big donor to a Senator in Oregon and complained to the politician. Quickly, the Senator made it known that he would push for a congressional investigation unless the “abusers” were punished.

The three of us learned of the congressional demand when the New Cadet Barracks Tactical Officer explained why we were ordered to stand before a Commandant’s Board! He also told us our punishment could include giving up summer leave or getting kicked out of the Academy!

The Board was held on the change of command day, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Detail. My two classmates went into the Board together. Later, I went in alone because I was the leader. I was informed of the seriousness of the situation, questioned, and listened to the discussion. I was impressed that my Tactical Officer argued that the three of us should not be slugged (confinement to barracks, no weekends off, and assigned hours of marching back and forth across Central Area). However, the Commandant made it clear that significant punishment was required.

That's when I became concerned. I might be leaving the Academy.

Finally, the Commandant announced that he considered expulsion but because of my record, I would only receive a 2-month slug to be served at the start of the school year. However, the report to the Senator would specify that the option to expel was still on the table.

I was relieved that I did not get kicked out of West Point and was allowed to go on summer leave. But, I was pissed because we did our job and this kid lied or at least misrepresented what was happening.

My two classmates got one-month slugs.

What happened to the kid? During 2<sup>nd</sup> Detail, he resigned and left the Academy.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** I learned that politics and money were more important than the Commandant doing the right thing. I learned the reach that Congress had over the military!

**LL #2:** One aspect of the New Cadet Company experience is to weed out those cadets that do not want to be or do not have the ability to be at the Academy. The circuit training contributed to convincing the kid he should follow another path. Meanwhile, four others succeeded in making it through to the academic year.

### **Saving a Cadet's Career**

#### **James (Sully) Sullivan I-4 29460**

Many leaders may recall an early situation in their leadership development that years later would inform their conduct as a leader. Some of those situations are serendipitous but have very significant “takeaways.” The following vignette has two parts. The first

describes how an event affected me as a cadet. The second presents my behavior and response to a cadet's situation years later.

The vignette underscores a leader taking the initiative to do the right thing for the right reasons, as it would develop long-term results from that leadership. It is also an example of servant leadership in its purest form, without expecting personal advantage or gain. Some readers may find it a poignant story.

## Cadet Sullivan

During my senior year at West Point in 1970, a different Regimental Tactical Officer assumed command, Colonel W. He looked at my record and saw some liability for himself. So, he called me in and said it would be bad for his reputation if he let me squeak out of the Academy and into the Army. This meeting was in March, with three months to go until graduation.

I thought this was a bit draconian, even though I could see some of his point. He advised me of his intention to refer me to the Commandant as a NO-GO. I did not have a leg to stand on, having recently received a 2-month confinement slug with 44 punishment tours marching back and forth outside the barracks and reduction to the grade of private.

The offense was "Exceedingly gross lack of judgment, i.e., unauthorized escorting an unauthorized civilian female in an unauthorized vehicle going the wrong way down a one-way street, during hours unauthorized for escorting, and committing a public display of affection, by kissing the female, while wearing improper uniform, i.e., unbuttoned collar and improperly shined shoes, while in need of a haircut." once again

As a result of being busted, my sidearm was revoked, and I returned to carrying a rifle. Therefore, I wound up pulling guard duty Saturday afternoon in the library.

Unexpectedly, an older guy with two hearing aids, about 5' 3", walks in with his wife, accompanied by his giant friend and *his* wife. The older guy had slicked-back gray hair and a strained, anxious.

I approached and saluted him and his party, waiting at the front turnstile of the entrance to the Library's main room. Immediately, he launches into a fast, breathless, urgent rap, clearly rehearsed and edited, trying for some effect.

I knew, by troop-leading instinct, that something was up. This older fellow was trying way too hard.

"Young man, my name is Colonel Awtrey, and I am a retired Army lawyer and former JAG for Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group. I landed at Normandy with the General and

was wounded there. I got the Legion of Merit. I am in the Who's Who of Americans and a member of the Army-Navy Club in D.C. I served under Ike and . . ."

This was a sweeping and dramatic rhetorical display, full of flourish and very interesting. The little guy cut a fine figure, and my clue came as I noticed him cutting his eyes periodically over to his wife's face, seeming to note how he was doing. Then, it all clicked and became familiar. *He was trying to score points with his chick!*

I thought *I'm "gonna" jump on this guy's bandwagon. We're going to impress this 65-year-old girl real good.*"

I pop to and say YES SIR ,and proceed to show him and his group all the nooks and crannies, authorized or not. VIP red carpet treatment. Then I got off duty and took them into the mess hall, the barracks, the steam tunnel, the sinks, the gym, the whole 9 yards.

I had a blast. It was working. His wife was beaming at him, and he was smiling and grinning. After I put them in their car, he hopped back out and grabbed me. "Thanks a million, kid. I know you stepped it up a notch more than I rate. But you did me a world of good with my bride." He hands me his card and tells me to have dinner at the Army-Navy Club in D.C. on him.

So, he confirmed what I thought about trying to impress the wife. We did it, and it was utterly gratifying, fun, and an excellent experience.

Life went on, and I assumed I'd never see him and his wife again. But I did hear from him one more time. About two weeks later, the tactical officer collared me and said, "Get up to my office. I have some paperwork on you."

I figured Colonel W. got me; I'm a goner. I go into the Tac's office, and he flips open a bundle of correspondence. "Read it."

- Top letter from the Superintendent: "Well Done, Mr. Sullivan. Keep up the good work!"
- Next letter from the Commandant: "Excellent! Noted and forwarded with pleasure. You are a credit to the Corps." The Commandant added, "Hell, let the kid graduate. He must have something on the ball."
- Next letter: "I am Colonel Awtrey, and I am an attorney. I served as JAG to Omar Bradley . . ." At the end he wrote, "Cadet Sullivan is a mixture of U. S. Grant, St Patrick, Noah Webster, Achilles, and Phil Sheridan." Or something equally hyperbolic.

The upshot was he really saved, my butt! I was allowed to graduate commissioned infantry and later served in Army Aviation as a pilot. That's why I will never forget Colonel Awtrey and his lesson about the unbelievable power of speaking up for a blemished subordinate who demonstrates the right stuff.

## Cadet Shrank

They say what goes around, comes around. And here it comes. Twenty-seven years later, in August 1997, I was reminiscing at West Point for a few hours. It was during Beast Barracks, so the new plebes were under the supervision of the Firsties. When I strolled into the gym, a gang of plebes were running around in a pack, blowing off steam.

I noticed the young cadet in charge, who reminded me of my number-2 son, Mick. So, I walk over and strike up a conversation.



USMA Barracks at West Point, New York

His name was Bryan Padraic Shrank, Class of 1998. I asked him what branch was he going select, and his face fell. Turns out, he suffered a lesion on the surface of his cerebral cortex in Plebe boxing, had a few convulsions, was pulled out, spent the better part of a year at Walter Reed, was declared fit, and recycled to the class behind him.

His Yearling year was fine, and so was the third year, until the end, when he fell down during field training and struck his head. The impact triggered another seizure, and he went before a Surgeon's Board. It recommended to the authorities that he be dismissed

with honor, with a degree but no commission, if he successfully completed his fourth academic year.

I asked him how he felt about that decision, and he explained that he had wanted nothing else his whole young life, to be a West Pointer and a tank officer in the U. S. Army. I could tell he was heartbroken.

But then he said something that moved me so much that I almost choked up. Even now, I feel myself reacting to it.

He looked me right in the eye and quietly said, "Sir, if I have to get rejected to keep the standard high, then maybe that's how I can serve my country."

In the face of that purity, I didn't have a response, but it haunted me continuously for three days until it came to me. I heard this little voice saying, "My name is Colonel Awtrey, and I am an attorney. I served with Omar Bradley...."

I put pen to paper and sent a letter to Lieutenant General Christman, my favorite Superintendent. I wrote about my adventure with Colonel Awtry, then told him, as forcefully, respectfully, and clearly as I could, that I saw:

"Duty, Honor, Country shining out clear and strong from Cadet Shrank's eyes, and I know that we needed him on top of that hill in the night, with the troops, in the face of the enemy. We have to, General, in my humble opinion, find a way to keep and use this man. I know you know best, but I wield my pen like my benefactor did 27 years ago."

The Superintendent sent my letter to the Commandant, our old friend and fine soldier, Brigadier General Bobby St. Onge. He wrote me an answer that said, and I closely paraphrase:

"Sully, Thanks for the note and your interest. The Board said no to Cadet Shrank, but I am the Com, and I say yes. Supe agrees. We commission him as a tanker in June.

Best from West Point,

Saint."

Bryan Shrank and I spoke on the phone the next day. He said he could not believe it and asked how he could thank me. I told him that would be easy. There will be some lieutenant or sergeant, some worthy person someplace, someday, and you will find yourself positioned to influence the action. Then, the little voice will be heard.

### **Postscript**

Generals Christman and St. Onge, the Supe and the Com, demonstrated a hefty helping of Heart and Soul to go along with their Duty, Honor, Country.

Bryan Shrank's career underscores long-term benefits to the Army and the Country when leaders take action to salvage blemished but good soldiers.



Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Padraic Shrank, USMA '98 commissioned Armor made two deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan as an armored cavalry platoon leader and reconnaissance platoon leader.

He transferred to space operations with a following assignment to the US Army Space and Missile Defense Command as a Space Platoon Leader, then Space Company Commander, and in 2015 to 2017, he commanded the 1st Space Battalion.

Colonel Shrank also served a tour at the Pentagon on the Space Staff. He is one of the officers who contributed to the development of the Space Force.

He is now the G3 (Current Operations) for Space and Missile Defense Command, an Army Command led by a Lieutenant General.

**Lesson Learned:** Senior leaders directly affect the careers of subordinates. At times, they are on the fence about removing someone from the ranks. In this case, two trusted advisors spoke up for the merit of two cadets. Their initiative helped the Academy Superintendent and Commandant make good decisions. Two saved subordinates went on to prove their ability and dedicated commitment as officers.

### **1976 Honor Scandal**

**Neal Ellis H-1 28805**

In the spring of 1976, as a newly minted Army Judge Advocate General lawyer, I was researching and writing a brief for filing in a federal district court. I looked up when my branch chief appeared with a stack of pleadings recently served on the Secretary of the Army. As a part of the Army Litigation Division, my branch had the mission of defending the Secretary of the Army and Army officers when sued in their official capacity in courts anywhere in the country.

My branch chief asked me, "What do you know about the Honor Code at West Point?" I had already heard about the emerging honor scandal within the Class of 1977, which had netted as many as a hundred cadets who had allegedly cheated on an electrical engineering test. Having served on the Honor Committee for three years as a cadet, I knew what was coming. He dropped the files on my desk and wished me luck.

The complaints, filed by cadets facing expulsion after honor boards found them guilty of cheating, sought to prevent separation by claiming that the Honor Code and Honor System were unconstitutional. Plus, they were denied due process of law. Their filings also sought temporary restraining orders (TROs), preliminary injunctions, and permanent

injunctions barring the Superintendent and the Secretary from taking any action to expel them.



Cover photo courtesy of pinterest.com

We moved quickly because hearings on TROs and preliminary injunctions have short fuses. From interviewing and obtaining affidavits from professors in the Electrical Engineering Department, we learned that the entire Class of 1977 had been given a graded, take-home problem in their EE-304 course. The instructions for the problem were explicit and unambiguous: no collaboration was allowed.

However, when the solutions were submitted, one of the cadet's papers included a statement stating, "This project does not represent all my own work."

After the EE professors (Ps, as cadets called them) compared the submissions, they concluded that massive cheating had occurred. Some of the Ps surmised that over four hundred members of the Class of 1977 had violated the Honor Code. Because the numbers were so overwhelming, a special review panel and officer boards ensued. During late spring and early summer of 1976, the boards produced 152 admissions of guilt or guilty verdicts leading to separation.

Meanwhile, some members of the Class of 1977 did not go out quietly. They had resolved to fight the separations with federal court actions and administrative proceedings. One cadet strategized that if enough members of the Class of 1977 were identified as EE-304 cheaters, then the Department of the Army would never force them out. He named

as many as a hundred other classmates as cheaters. The same cadet, when asked by a national media outlet what he thought of West Point, replied on national TV, "West Point is for liars, thieves, and cheats." Ultimately, he appeared as the lead plaintiff in the complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

As I prepared the papers opposing the cadets' motions for preliminary injunctions, I found that we had plenty of good authority to defend the cases. For the most part, the courts have given the military broad latitude in questions that relate to the training, service, and deployment of members of the armed services, including cadets and midshipmen. So, when I went to New York City to argue the case, I felt hopeful that Judge Richard Owen, the federal district judge assigned to decide the case, would pay attention to our briefs and follow that line of precedent.

The plaintiffs in the New York case were represented by a well-known and flamboyant trial attorney named Henry Rothblatt. Rothblatt droned on for about forty minutes, portraying the accused cadets as victims of an oppressive system that blatantly and intentionally denied his client's due process of law.

Judge Owen sat impassively during Rothblatt's argument and asked no questions. His demeanor was virtually inscrutable. When I rose to argue the Academy's side of the case, Judge Owen said, "Sit down, Captain." Although I had plenty to say, I knew enough that when a federal judge tells you to sit down, that is what you do.

After a moment's reflection, Judge Owen issued his order from the bench. He decided that the plaintiff cadets had failed to carry their burden, denied their motion for a preliminary injunction, and concluded that the Academy would likely win at a trial on the merits. Several months later, he dismissed the federal complaint filed by the cadets. We won! The Honor Code and the Honor System survived the legal challenges.

But our celebration was short-lived. Secretary of the Army Martin Hoffman created a commission to investigate the causes of the EE-304 scandal. The Commission was chaired by Colonel Frank Borman (West Point Class of 1950), a Company H-1 icon, astronaut, and president of Eastern Airlines.

The Commission was directed to take a "broad-based, sensitive, non-intrusive look" into the future of the West Point Honor Code and System. Colonel Borman's Commission affirmed the Secretary's actions, offering a "second chance" to the separated cadets. It determined that while the cadets were guilty of cheating, their culpability had to be viewed "against the unrestrained growth of the 'cool-on-honor' subculture at the Academy, the widespread violations of the Honor Code, the gross inadequacies of the System, the failures of the Academy to act decisively concerning known honor problems, and other Academy shortcomings."

Readmission to West Point was offered to 105 of the 152 dismissed cadets. Ultimately, 85 of them graduated with the Class of 1978. The Superintendent, Lieutenant General (LTG) Sidney Berry, commented, “I think our chief institutional failing was not being sensitive enough to those great society changes – Vietnam, different values of young people ...”

Before and after the scandal of 1976, the wording of the Honor Code has not changed: A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. However, the System has evolved significantly from what we knew as members of the Class of 1970. Most importantly, the “honor process” is now suffused with lawyers, several levels of review, and various procedures intended to guarantee due process. See West Point magazine, Volume 12, Issue 1 (Winter 2022) at p. 48, reflecting USCC Pam 15-1 “Honor Process.”

Before 1977, the cadets owned the Honor Code and Honor System. From my limited perspective, I always believed that the Honor Committee afforded cadets accused of code violations with abundant fairness and gave them the benefit of any doubt. For good or ill, during that era, cadets were charged with the responsibility of training and educating cadets, investigating possible violations by cadets, and adjudicating guilt or innocence.

After 1977, the Corps no longer owned the Honor System. Many could argue that the infusion of due process, lawyers, layers of review, and complex procedures were not just justified but also inevitable to improve the Honor System.

By the late 1980s, virtually every government agency saw administrative changes to its personnel policies and procedures, reflecting a new era of due process guarantees. Welcomed or not, the changes have taken root. But it’s worth remembering that the Corps has always owned the Honor Code and that there was a time when we also owned the Honor System.

I was not enamored with the changes to the System in 1977. We had worked hard through the litigation to preserve the Code and System as we knew it. But by the mid-1970s, the winds of change were in the air for West Point, the Army, and America. The war in Vietnam had ended, and a new generation of senior Army leaders began re-building the Army into the lethal machine that would later dominate warfare and crush its adversaries. Women were admitted to West Point and found opportunities outside the traditional branches that earlier graduates served in. New challenges to Western hegemony appeared in a resurgent Russia, an ambitious China, and an intractable Iran. All of which reinforces what we learned in the mid-1970s as young Army officers.

**Lesson Learned #1:** We would constantly face the challenges of rapid and unrelenting change. We might not like it, but we couldn’t afford to cling to old doctrines

and institutions that might not afford us the winning edge on the battlefield. We had to expect, grow, and adapt to change.

**Lesson Learned #2:** I also learned to be grateful for people like Colonel Borman and LTG Berry, who knew what needed to change despite institutional resistance and had the courage to lead us to the right result.

## Chapter 3 — Ranger School Adventures



Ranger School is the Army's toughest course and the premier small unit tactics and leadership school. All students are volunteers. Except in the 1970s, when West Point graduates were required to attend the school. The training significantly influences each classmate's military and civilian life.

The Ranger Course is mentally and physically challenging to develop functional skills directly related to units whose mission is to engage the enemy in close combat and direct fire battle.

For 62 days, Ranger students train to exhaustion, pushing the limits of their minds and bodies. Following the crawl-walk-run training methodology, the course incorporates three phases (Darby, Mountain, and Swamp). In the Darby phase, the students become trained on squad operations and focus on ambush and recon missions, patrol base operations, and planning before moving on to platoon operations. In the Mountain phase, students develop their skills at the platoon level to refine and complete their training during the always enjoyable Swamp phase.

After these three phases, Ranger Students are proficient in leading squad and platoon dismounted operations around the clock in difficult climates and terrain. Rangers are better trained, more capable, more resilient, and better prepared to serve and lead soldiers in their next duty position.

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### **The Ranger Standard We Must Meet**

**James (Sully) Sullivan I-4 29460**

Today is 6 June 2024, the 80th anniversary of D-Day in the WW II European Theater. June 6<sup>th</sup> is also my birthday, as it is for classmates Howard Guy and Art Hudson.

However, since I was a kid, I have been sharply aware that my first day was the last day for 6,603 of our countrymen and Allies. America lost about 2,500 infantrymen on

Omaha beach alone, most in just a few hours. When I wake on D-Day, I remember that fact first thing and head straight for Mass.

Every D-Day I also always recall an event that happened after church one day in the middle of the week in winter, about 2018. I went to a local restaurant near the church for breakfast. Inside, I spotted an old Ranger, short and lean, about 95 years old. He sat by himself at a table and wore a cap with the insignia of LTC James Rudder's 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion. The Ranger unit that took Pointe du Hoc on D-Day.

I was wearing a Ranger sweatshirt and when our eyes met, he winked at me. I stopped and shook his hand and told him how much my Brothers and I admired him and his Brothers.

I asked "You went up Pointe du Hoc?"

His eyes dilated a bit, and he went away for a moment. Then he came back and looked up at me. "Yes, we did."

I could feel the tears well up in my eyes, and they spilled over, and I let them go. He put his hand over mine and squeezed it. Then he said these words which became a lesson I will never forget:

"You know, terrible people watch what we do with our Army. And as long as there are guys like us that will go up the cliff, and guys like you and your crew who will continue the Ranger tradition, take the training and suffering, and show that you'll do it, those terrible people stay scared. And they are not so quick to come at us. We protect the civilians that way."

Then he said, very quietly, while patting my hand like my father, "OK, son, I know, I know. Stay safe."

I somehow knew not to press it and didn't ask his name, and I never saw him again. I'm not sure who he was, but I consider him the very spirit of the U.S. Army at Normandy.

My Dad, 1LT James P. Sullivan Sr., had that spirit too. He flew across Omaha Beach three times that day, at less than fifty feet, delivering close air support for the 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions. Each pass drew ravaging ground fire trying to stop his attack. His parachute was torn from his back as shrapnel and automatic weapons fire sliced through the cockpit,

He once said he looked down between the pedals and saw the infantry getting off the boats and falling like "wheat under a scythe."

That day, my Dad made it back to England for fuel and bombs after each sortie. However, later in the war, he was shot down three times, belly-landed in France, and made it back to England twice with the aid of the French *Maquis*.

Unfortunately, he had to bail out during the third mission and landed among the Germans who quickly grabbed him. Imprisoned, he escaped but was recaptured and finally liberated by Patton's 3rd Army.

He was wounded three times and had the worst case of PTSD I ever saw. I don't think he ever quite got over D-Day. If I'd known then what I know now, I would have done something for him. But when he died, everything was still "Fight or Flee."

On D-Day, I also think about another example of selfless sacrifice and raw courage in the other WW II theater, the Pacific. There, classmate Mike Gyovai's Dad avoided internment after his unit was captured and put on the Bataan Death March. He and several others broke away and hooked up with the Philippine guerillas in the hills. At enormous peril, they spent the rest of the war behind enemy lines, ferociously killing the Japanese soldiers until they rejoined American forces.

So, on this day of selfless sacrifice, unbelievable raw courage, and unwavering determination let me offer this D-Day prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on us sinners.

*Shema Yisroel, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echod.*

Please hold all the soldiers who died for their countrymen this day in Your Big Hand and near Your Sacred Heart. Please hold close all who fought on D-Day.

Please take the old Ranger from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rangers to You.

Please keep my Dad, Big Sully, as brave a man as ever flew, safe in Your Embrace.

Please protect our beloved U.S. Army and all the servicemen and women of the world, even the enemy.

Please grant us Peace.

Amen.



75th Ranger Regiment Insignia



## **On A Cold North Georgia Ridge**

**Tom (Roz) Rozman A-3 29484**

**& Ray (Settee) Cossette H-2 29092**

There are situations in organizations that demand that a job get done, causing leaders to expend an extra ounce of their internal toughness to meet the situation. What follows is such a situation.

It was December 1970 in the Northeast Georgia Mountains. Second Lieutenant Ray Cossette was the patrol leader. I, also a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, marched beside Ray as his radio operator.

Our winter ranger patrol, a squad-size unit, struggled up a steep slope to reach a higher ridgeline, leading us to an objective rally point (ORP). Freezing rain and sleet had been hammering us since the gray light of day had faded into black darkness hours earlier.

Ponchos kept our field jackets and liners somewhat dry despite freezing rain, sleet, and sinking evening temperatures. Our coats, plus the effort to climb the ridge with heavy loads, generated enough energy to retain some body heat. But the wet promised to freeze as the night became even colder and made movement on the already treacherous slopes even more so with increased potential for injuries.

But it was critical that we reach the ORP positioned above a small mountain valley where an element from the patrol would move down to rendezvous with a “partisan.” There, the friendly would provide rations for our squad-sized unit that had been patrolling in the area for the better part of a week.

Given the patrol had consumed all carried rations and been without rations for more than a day, the food provided by the partisan was critical to maintaining the patrol's ability to complete its larger mission. Our orders were to rendezvous with three other patrol squads of the platoon and then conduct a platoon-strength raid on a target 30 kilometers distant.

The climb to the higher ridge proved grueling and severely affected many of our previously injured or sick members. In fact, Patrol Leader Cossette was shaking from what seemed like flu.

On top of the ridge, we began contouring five kilometers toward the east, hunting for where the ridge widened with a shallow bowl between the slopes — our designated ORP. As we moved forward, treacherous wet and increasingly mud-greased rocks and tree roots underfoot began taking a toll. The unrelenting obstacle course caused rangers with past ankle and knee injuries to feel harsh pain as they attempted to make their way and

occasionally lost footing. Some fell into small ravines that radiated off the ridge top, suddenly dropping three to five feet into the temporary open space before crashing onto solid rock.

Meanwhile, navigating by the patrol leader was tremendously difficult. Pitch darkness and security restrictions from using any light prevented him from checking our position by taking compass readings and azimuths to surrounding features. Plus, our topographic maps, adapted from high-elevation photographs of the ground overlaid with superimposed grid lines, were not always accurate. Verifying our position had become almost impossible in the severe weather. Intersecting ridges along the route were also difficult to navigate accurately, especially as the patrol approached the ORP location, where several ridge configurations appeared.

Lt. Cossette used dead reckoning from the last known point and measured distance by pace. Eventually, he called a halt after what seemed endless toiling along the crest of the ridge. Based on all indicators he had, the patrol leader believed he was at the ORP site; a cursory check of the ground seemed to bear out his conclusion.

By then, the wind had significantly increased, driving stinging pellets of frozen sleet into our faces. Yet, given the conditions, the patrol moved through the pitch blackness amazingly well, a testament to their previous training and conditioning.

The patrol leader had issued a quick situation brief stressing that at 0300, he would move down the slope with two other rangers to link with the partisans. Then, while the patrol went to a 50% security alert/sleep configuration, the patrol leader and I positioned ourselves in a central location within the perimeter between two granite slabs.

I could tell the patrol leader was exhausted as he took the opportunity to sleep wedged into the cradle of rocks that served as a bed. Knowing he was running a fever I decided to take his watch and monitored the radio using what protection our ponchos and coats provided. But skin dampness brought on by the climb to the ridge and march to the ORP increased my feeling of cold. Still, I dozed, only to snap awake, feeling ice-cold water trickling down my back.

Checking my watch, I saw it was 0300. So, I shook the patrol leader awake. He was in sad shape but pulled himself together and quickly moved off to gather the two rangers who would accompany him down the ridge.

Since there was still some doubt that the ORP was where it was supposed to be, the movement down the ridge would have to confirm the location or adjust the route to ensure rendezvous with the partisans.

As BMNT (begin morning nautical twilight) appeared, the patrol leader's party had not returned, and I became concerned. Daylight was approaching, and the patrol needed

to consume its food, then use the information provided by the partisans to plan how it would continue its linkup at sunrise.

Overnight, light snow had blanketed the ground and trees with several inches of white snow. When the overcast cleared, we saw the sky promising a cold, sunny day.

As the morning sky grew lighter the patrol leader's party finally returned with a live chicken and an assortment of raw vegetables and potatoes. I gathered material to make a fire while the patrol leader slaughtered the bird, and other rangers cut up the vegetables and then dressed the chicken, cutting its meat into small pieces. We shared the food after improvising a stew pot to boil the vegetables and chicken. Little time remained, so we ate as we marched.

Luckily, as the sun rose higher in the sky, the day became brilliant, with a bright blue sky highlighted by white snow shining beautifully in the cold, frosty mountain air.

The patrol quickly got into stride as it moved tactically down a wooded slope, then along a wood line skirting a mountain pasture. We made good progress and linked up with the other three squads of the platoon. As time passed, the patrol leader shook his bout of fever and was able to support the successful raid.



Camp Frank D. Merrill, Dahlonega, Georgia

### **Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** My patrol leader was almost reduced to an inability to function by illness in a hostile weather and terrain situation. But he reached deep inside and found the grit and will to ensure the mission was accomplished. This proved that physical and mental toughness is often the key to effective leadership.

**LL #2:** Plus, the formation of an effective team provided overlap and reinforcement when something unexpected occurred, in this case, illness. Rangers lead the way!

## Ranger 7: Well ... here we are

John Shull G-2 28969

The U.S. Army Ranger School has always been described as a grueling physical and mental challenge – an elite school among all the military services. When members of the Class of 1970 were students there as new 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants, many had orders to go to Vietnam, so the levels of stress and expectation were particularly high.

My class, Ranger 7-71, began the 58-day course in early November 1970, just outside Ft Benning, GA as “winter Rangers”. The myth was that we would sew on our ranger tabs with white thread. There also was a tradition at the time for each Ranger class to create their own identity with a motto or phrase that would be repeated loudly many times a day. It resounded in the early stages of group physical training (PT), during land navigation, at the obstacle course, in patrolling classes at Camp Darby, and carry on through the two long and arduous months of training. Each class was divided into platoons, with an arbitrarily appointed Class Leader at the company level, also a student.

A typical class motto, was one that I heard from a class a few months before ours: “*Ranger Five, Eat ‘Em Alive.*” It sounded pretty tough and the ranger cadre loved it. Well, *Ranger Seven*, my class, of mostly West Point classmates, wasn’t quite so eager. We were closer to a state of benign indifference.

When Master Sergeant Burnell, the rock-hard veteran Ranger Cadre Operations NCOIC took one look at 6-foot, 5-inch 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Mike Gyovai, he said, “you’re the class leader.” Since, Mike had played basketball at West Point for hall-of-fame coach Bobby Knight, he was used to a very challenging regimen.

Our new leader soon came to us and said “help me guys, we gotta have a motto.” Having heard the gung-ho versions, we quickly chose instead “*Ranger Seven ... well ... here we are.*” The cadre was not impressed. This led to innumerable pushups for Mike, and, by default, the whole company.

So, here’s how it worked: Our Class Tactical Officer was a strict, loud, demanding but fair, Infantry Captain and combat veteran. We’ll call him Captain W. He would bait and challenge us constantly: “Rangers, you’re gonna die in the Mountain phase,” (conducted in Dahlonega, North Georgia). Upon arrival at the Dahlonega camp, we all yelled back, “*Well ... here we are!*”

When we prepared to depart the mountain phase, Captain W yelled, “Rangers, you’re gonna die in the swamp phase,” (conducted in northwest Florida). When we arrived in

Florida, still doing mega-hundreds of pushups, we yelled back at Captain W, “*Well ... here we are.*”

The motto became an elixir for us that built our comradeship and teamwork, as we survived each phase of Ranger School. We started approximately 280 students and graduated around 150 -- just over 50%.

Nearly 50 years after we completed Ranger School in January 1971, I met Captain W at a conference at West Point, and reminded him of our ranger class and our upstart motto. He laughed wholeheartedly and told me that Ranger 7 was one of the most successful classes in a generation, despite our cheeky motto and attitude. And Mike Gyovai was the Honor Graduate!

**Lesson Learned:** The incandescent mixture of a strong attitude, comradeship, and teamwork makes soldiers ready to show up and overcome tough challenges.

### **Asleep at the Wheel**

**Robert (Bob) Babcock G-2 28882 &**

**Brian Bryson G-2 28878**

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### **Bob Babcock’s Experience**

It was the end of a six-day patrol at the end of the mountain phase of Ranger School in desolate Dahlonega, Georgia. I was the leader of the last task, so when my ambush mates climbed into the back of the deuce and a half truck around midnight, I became the vehicle commander.

I must have fallen asleep during the convoy back to base camp. As had our driver as we woke inverted at the bottom of an embankment. Unfortunately, my Academy classmate, Brian Bryson, was air-lifted out with a skull fracture. Meanwhile, an ambulance took me to a local clinic with a broken and dislocated elbow.

After surgery at Fort McPherson, I had the option to jump into Florida during the next cycle of training (with my arm still in a cast) or leave. Having, in my mind, already met the training objective of learning my physical and mental limits while conducting platoon operations, I chose to go on to my Basic Officer Course at Ft Gordon.

A few weeks later, I was summoned to the commanding officer’s office and given a sealed envelope. The cover letter advised me of my Miranda rights. Underneath was a DD 200 Report of Survey finding me financially liable for the damage to the vehicle, about \$2000, since I was the senior occupant at the time of the accident. Wow! that would take

a long time to pay off at my pay grade! And being found negligent for a training accident would not bode well for a career in the Army.

As the individual charged, I could attach a statement of objection. I had enough classroom law training to know I should learn more before composing my objection. I asked for and was given time to seek help from the JAG office.

**Lessons Learned:** A copy of the applicable regulation quickly became a self-help session. The regulations essentially said that I could be held liable if:

- ✓ I had personal responsibility for the vehicle and was guilty of simple negligence
- ✓ Or I had supervisory responsibility for the vehicle and was guilty of willful misconduct or gross negligence.

Yes, I had supervisory responsibility as the senior occupant and was negligent for falling asleep. Still, I argued that I had neither personal responsibility nor did I exhibit gross negligence or willful misconduct. My objection must have been accepted because I never heard any more about the damage to the truck.

After the Basic Officer course, my first assignment was in the 143d Signal Battalion. I arrived when that unit began turning in MRC-69s (analog multichannel equipment) for TRC-145s (digital multichannel equipment).

The old equipment was so cannibalized that much of it was missing. The Property Officer had assigned several DD 200s to my fellow lieutenants and me to complete with findings. I quickly became a great help to my fellow officers by guiding them on how to reach a finding in ten minutes or so for each Report of Survey.

Not only had I learned a \$2000 lesson by successfully handling the Report of Survey for the damaged truck, but I also gained gratitude for sharing my lesson learned which garnered me many German beers.

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### **Brian Bryson's Experience**

It was the end of a six-day patrol at the end of the mountain phase of Ranger School in desolate Dahlonega, Georgia. I was a platoon member when my ambush mates and I climbed into the back of the deuce-and-a-half truck around midnight. I'm sure we all fell asleep almost immediately.

My following memories were occasional moments of consciousness in the hospital. There, I learned that I had suffered a depressed skull fracture after the truck ran off the road. I had been air medevac'd to the Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital in Atlanta,

where a neurosurgeon cut out a fist-sized chunk of my damaged skull. The result was the surgeon stitched up my scalp, leaving a soft spot in the upper left side of my head.

I spent 30 days in the hospital (both VA and the Fort Benning hospital). Then, I was sent on thirty days of convalescent leave. When I reported back to Ranger School, I received a set of orders declaring that I was a graduate, and I was told to sew the Ranger tab onto my dress greens before I came back the next day to process out.

I don't know this for a fact, but I'm sure I'm one of the very few people to graduate from Ranger School, without going through the Florida swamp phase of training. I guessed that the school's leadership expected I would be medically discharged from the Army, or felt some level of responsibility for the accident.

The injury did change my life. I had been scheduled for assignment to the 82nd Airborne, but facing a year with a restrictive medical profile, and corrective surgery after that, I was given the chance to look at other assignment opportunities.

I selected a slot that had just come open in the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. I spent my recovery year as a platoon leader and was fortunate to have my follow-on surgery performed at Tripler Army Medical Center. During that operation, the surgeon inserted a plastic plate in my skull. After that, I was back to full duty with no physical limitations.

I met my wife, Colleen, during my time in Hawaii, and that was certainly a life-changing event. Later, when I elected to leave the service after six years (just a personal decision, having nothing to do with the injury), I was evaluated for a VA disability and granted a 60% disability. The injury, supported by an EEG study, could have caused brain damage, but I'm lucky that I have never suffered from anything of that nature.

**Lesson Learned:** No matter how bad things may seem, keep your head up and make the best of the alternatives that your misfortune may present.

### **Airborne Ranger & Wife**

#### **Frank Monaco B-4 29134**

Two weeks after graduation from the Academy on 3 June 1970, I was fortunate to meet Paulette Gail Petrino. She wowed me that summer. So, I kept in contact with her after going to Airborne School, at Fort Benning, Georgia in August. During the first jump, I crashed and burned and could not make the jog the following morning with a broken ankle.

## **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Keep your feet and knees together after your T-10 chute opens because the ground comes up quickly!

Unable to complete airborne training, I was shipped out to Fort Sill for the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course until December, where I learned how to be a Forward Observer and plan fire support.

After my ankle healed, I returned to Fort Benning in November-December and finished my last four qualifying jumps but in vastly different weather conditions – cold and wet versus hot and sunny in the summer. During Christmas leave, I went home and got engaged to Paulette.

In January 1971, I returned to Fort Benning for Winter Ranger School class 8-71 (The Hawk is a Whore). There, I joined seven other unlucky classmates, including my ranger buddy Jim Sullivan, stuck in brutal freezing winter weather, surviving on a starvation diet.

I was terrible at navigation with a compass, especially with ice on my face while shivering from near hyperthermia. However, my fire support planning knowledge, my great ranger buddy, and the knowledge that I was now engaged to the love of my life somehow got me through the Georgia and Florida February patrols to reach March graduation.

**LL #2:** In Ranger School, use and offer whatever skill set you possess to compensate for skills you are not as proficient with (in my case, land navigation!). I made it through Ranger School by helping classmates create Patrol Fire Planning Appendixes, so they passed their graded operation orders. The ones I helped (especially my Ranger Buddy) got me through land navigation!

With the Ranger tab on my shoulder and airborne wings on my chest, I headed to Fort Bragg for two tours. There, I became a Master Parachutist, and during weekends, I became a Class-D Licensed Sky Diver with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Sport Parachute Club.

**LL #3:** Learn from your mistakes. Although I failed my first military jump, I pushed forward and mastered being “Airborne.”





Frank and Paulette Monaco

The year ended even better than my airborne and ranger successes. On Sunday, October 3, 1971, at the Most Holy Trinity Catholic Chapel at West Point, Father McCormick married me and my wonderful Paulette.

**LL #4:** Choose to marry someone you are highly compatible with. Someone with patience, compassion, and understanding. Someone smarter than you in ways you never expected. Someone you can trust. Someone like my Paulette.

### **Three Life Lessons**

**James (Sully) Sullivan I-4 29460**

Here are three short lessons. The first taught me why we were in Ranger School, and I have used it a dozen times since. The second moved me to repair my wrongdoings as soon as possible instead of letting them haunt me forever. The third showed me the relationship between fear and danger.

#### **LL #1: Tough training builds good leaders**

The first lesson was handed to me by an old master sergeant who was a lane grader in the Florida phase of Ranger School.

About day nine of the twelve-day patrol, all in our platoon were near-psychotic, seeing things, physically spent, worn down to the nub, injured three or four ways, starving, exhausted, and spectacularly pissed off. We formed a perimeter during a stop, and I kneeled on one knee to rest. I do not know to this day if this encounter was part hallucination, part real, all a dream, or what.

The MSG strolled over to me with a tiny, cute delicious-looking wild bunny rabbit in the palm of his hand, petting it. I calculated how long it would take me to rip the fur off and get a good mouthful before he could react.

He said, “Don’t get any @#\$/%^&\* ideas, Ranger. Do you know why you are here?”

Of course, I knew or thought I did, but I was cranky and sore and resistant, so I said, “No, I do not.”

He nodded. “Three things. One, you will learn you can exceed your limits. Two, you will learn that you don’t really have any limits; they are arbitrary. By the time you reach them, you will be dead.”

Then came the punch line.

“Third, and by far the most important, nothing will ever be this bad again. Someday, you will stand in front of a group of heavily armed, pissed-off, hurting, suffering men who are cold and tired and wet and scared, and you can look them right in the eye and say—and really mean it—Men, this is nothing. I’ve been in worse than this, and we will be fine. Stick together and do what I do. Follow me.”

Even in my depleted state, that made sense. Since then, I have experienced leadership situations proving the MSG was right.

Duty, Honor, Country; Serve With Integrity; Follow Me; Rangers Lead the Way. They are all the lyrics to the same song.

## **LL #2: Make Amends**

I was the oldest of nine children. In 1961, one of my younger brothers was getting bullied every day. My father told me to fix that. So, I followed Mike home from school, half a block back. I was thirteen. He was eight.

Sure enough, a gang member my age from the other school popped out of an alley and began to beat up Mike. I ran up, hit him on the fly, and had a 13-year-old version of a fistfight, which I won because he said, “I give.” That meant he would stop bullying, and he put his hands down.

He had quit, but I didn't accept his surrender. With his arms down, I wound up and hit him as hard as I could in the nose. I felt it break and watched a flood of blood stream from his mouth and nose.

He screamed and ran away. At the dinner table that night, my brother bragged it up. Soon, I forgot about the whole thing.

Or so I thought, until 1978 when I was the pilot-in-command of a Huey, in the left seat, inbound to Eglin AFB in the northwest panhandle of Florida. We vectored around un-forecasted thunderstorms. Flying in a bowl of milk as night approached forced us to control the aircraft only by our instruments which showed we were dangerously low on fuel. That's when the generator failed, wobbling the instruments until I brought the notoriously unreliable standby generator online.

We were about five miles out in the Gulf of Mexico, turning for home following our compass and altimeter bearings, when the engine began the beginnings of fuel starvation. It was not there yet, but it was ominous. I radioed for immediate straight-in clearance, and just then, a U.S. Navy F14 fighter jet was flaming out and heading straight into Eglin. The Navy pilot stated "MAYDAY" calmly but clearly.

Our clearance was denied. Instead, we were ordered to hold at 2,000 feet, forcing us around the holding pattern once before beginning the inbound trek from four miles out at sea. With needles splitting, engine erratic, and instrument lights blinking, I knew we did not have enough gas to get all the way home. I anticipated having to execute a blind autorotation into the water below and, if we survived, dealing with sharks. That's when reality hit me. I knew we were going to die that night.

That realization triggered a memory to pop onto my mental screen: the image of that kid covered in blood. I said out loud, "I am so very sorry." I wasn't trying to avoid hell; I was just horribly remorseful for striking hard at someone who had surrendered. That stayed with me up until the moment of what I thought was my death.

I tried to make a good act of contrition but could not divert my focus from a likely crash. Instead, I briefed the crew on our procedure: IF we ran out of gas, I would execute an altimeter autorotation, flaring above the ocean surface and pulling pitch in the blind. In the water, we would deploy vests and head due north, sticking together to reach the beach.

The F14 crashed neatly on a foamed runway while we were descending down our approach glide path with a ground controller's voice guiding us. We broke out of the soup ten feet above the centerline of the runway just as the engine quit. I immediately autorotated off to the side and landed softly on the grass.

Here's the lesson learned. As soon as you realize you have harmed someone or done something wrong, you must make it right however you can, or it will be there for your accounting.

In my case, I tried to find that kid back home, but he died before I could get to him to make my amends.

### **LL #3: Overcome False Fear**

I was afraid I was going to die in the next five seconds on four different occasions in my nine years of active duty. One was during a violent disturbance in the barracks in Germany. The other three were in the air, in a Huey, in the United States.

In each of these situations, my fear level was sky-high, my heart pounded, my clothes were soaked through with sweat, my eyes were red and strained, my limbs shook, and I was very, very busy until the outcome, which was nothing like I feared.

In the barracks, I arrested an armed, psychotic assailant high on methamphetamine who gave up and relinquished his weapon without a shot fired or anyone hurt. In the air, my Huey more or less took care of us, and we managed not to crash — we just seemed to fly through it against all the odds. So, fear was high, while the actual danger, when all was said and done, was next to nothing.

Twenty-seven years later, I experienced just the opposite. As a civilian, I had a big, fat heart attack that knocked me down so hard I couldn't even talk. While a bunch of sledgehammer blows slammed my chest, I slipped into what was later diagnosed as a near-death experience. Death grabbed me and started pulling me away, and the whole thing was actually happening — not dread or anticipation; this was real-time actions at the objective.

But I had no fear, no anxiety, and no stress. For now, I will say there was peace. So, the fear level was low, almost nothing, while the actual threat of dying was very high!

These military and civilian incidents taught me that fear is nearly always false evidence. When you are in a bad fix, you are not afraid because you are engaged hard at work, fighting a real fight. So now, if I am afraid, I sort of discount it. In fact, I have only been slightly afraid since then, and only a few times.

Another thing I found out, because I glimpsed it in a way that I have trouble describing, is that death is nothing. It is like walking through a doorway. And, get this . . . all is well, no matter how it looks. There is really nothing to worry about, nothing to fear.

I also learned that even though I failed to contact the Creator because I physically could not, the Creator contacted me. I did not have to seek him out! He was there.

## **How I Became an Airborne Ranger**

**Richard (Dick or Beahmer) Beahm B-4 29056**

Most classmates who knew me as a cadet knew that I was pretty much a “Gray Hog”, relatively “Spooney,” and quite “Gung Ho.” Many also learned that I visited the USMA knee surgeons several times during my Yearling year. At least one of my company mates announced that “Beahmer was only acting Gung Ho and talking infantry because he was going to be forced to go non-Combat Arms upon graduation”— or words to that effect.

That certainly was not my belief or intention. I was going to be an infantryman! However, in Firstie year, I faced the hurdle of passing the mandatory physical test to determine my “worthiness,” as in “qualification” for commissioning. After completing the physical, I was told to report to Doctor Feagin. Neither of the surgeons who had performed my surgeries in 1967 and 1968 were still at West Point for my physical in December 1969. So, when I met with him, he had my records. Unfortunately, I knew he knew about all of the surgeries I had undergone as a Cadet.

Doc Feagin had also been the person who had declared my brother, Bob (USMA 1968), “not qualified for Combat Arms,” sending my brother to Ordnance Corps for his five years in the active Army.

I started our session by telling Doc Feagin, “I want to be an Infantry Officer!” He smiled; it was more like a laugh. However, he responded nicely by asking, “Have you ever thought about going to Flight School?” Before I could respond, he added, “Because, by the time you are 35, I’m not sure you will be able to walk and be an Infantryman.”

I said I hadn’t thought about it, but I agreed that Flight School would be a good idea. He answered, “For me to qualify you for Flight School, I would have to sign off on Combat Arms, Airborne, Ranger, Special Forces, and Aviation, in that order.”

I smiled.

He immediately fired back. “So, you would have to promise me that while you are a cadet, you cannot volunteer for Airborne or Ranger School.” I was satisfied that I could still be an infantry officer while my thoughts about being an Airborne Ranger had to be put on hold.

I am pretty sure that was when the rumor that our class would not all have to go to Ranger School started. On paper, I was qualified to be an Infantry Officer, and I chose Infantry at the branch drawing. Later, I selected Fort Carson as my interim assignment

enroute to the Republic of Vietnam. Mainly I did not want to choose Fort Bragg and be a “sorry leg!”

But it turned out that the rumor that the class would not have to go to Ranger school, was untrue. When my initial orders were cut, I was to go to the Infantry Officer Basic Course at Benning, followed by Ranger school, then report to Fort Carson. I was thrilled because I fulfilled my promise not to volunteer for Ranger school, yet the Army was sending me anyway!

While I was in Ranger School, in the “Leg Platoon,” a cadre member asked if any of us Ranger students wanted to go to Jump School? I said I sure did. And THAT is how I became an Airborne Ranger!



82<sup>nd</sup> ABN Division Jump

Photo courtesy of Defense Visual Information Distribution Service

Thanks to our dearly departed brother and classmate, Bill Bennett, who was also headed to Ft Carson for his interim assignment before continuing to the RVN, I learned that Company B (RANGER) 75th Infantry (ABN) was based at Ft Carson. As a result, we were both assigned to the Ranger Company until we departed for Vietnam in September 1971.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ You are only as good as your word and your integrity. So, stand by your promise if you say you will or won't do something.

- ✓ The Army often has designs on what your future will be, that you can leverage to achieve your career goals.

## Chapter 4 — Real World Missions



The lessons in this chapter emerged while we were officers or civilians conducting real world missions that occurred after the balloon went up or the crap hit the fan while we were in or out of the Service. These are not training events.

One construct that may help the reader assess lessons learned comes from *Military Misfortunes -The Anatomy of Failure in War*, by authors Elliot A. Cohen and John Gooch. Their book describes three types of failures in military operations: Failure to Anticipate, Failure to Learn, and Failure to Adapt. We add, failure to clearly communicate.

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### Category: Vietnam War 1971 - 1973

#### Arrival in Vietnam

Alan Brace C-4 29450

Before departing the airplane upon nighttime arrival in Vietnam (September 1971), we were given the standard warnings concerning alert methods and actions to take in the event of a mortar attack, sniper fire, or a ground attack.

Leaving the plane, I entered the air terminal and glanced at the 20-foot-high metal roof. Immediately, I envisioned the air burst effect should a mortar strike it. I was somewhat concerned. After initial in-country processing, we were assigned billets and told to get some sleep.





Pan Am delivery of U.S troops to Saigon VN  
photo courtesy of pinterest.com

Awakening in the morning, I was surprised to see so many Vietnamese moving about the army camp in their common uniform: black pajamas and wearing coolie hats. Midday I found myself seated in the outhouse when suddenly the siren wailed the signal that the perimeter was being OVERRUN! I nearly jumped out of the crapper with my pants around my ankles. Luckily, the door didn't burst fully open.

As I peeked outside, there was no mortar attack, no rifle fire along the perimeter, and no Viet Cong in battle uniform — just friendly Vietnamese calmly walking by in their silk pajamas and coolie hats. I realized I was safe.

**Lesson Learned:** The rear echelon processing center's siren always announced noon each day. It would have been nice if someone had told us that fact before hurrying us out of the airplane or releasing us from the in processing center. In a war zone, tell everyone when the danger alarms will be tested.

## Experience Before Command

Bill Malkemes G-3 29068

I have always looked at life challenges from the perspective of how best to succeed. I assess the risks and rewards of an action or doing nothing. Deciding how to proceed is

rooted in my approach for choosing what needs to be done and under what timelines my team receives or develops unilaterally. Under this is my simplistic triad that we go through life getting education, training, and experience at various levels - and the synthesis of these guides us to successful decisions.

For example, many of us in the Class of 1970 wanted to volunteer to go to a unit in Vietnam for our first assignment - many did. Reasons varied: to test their leadership skills, to experience combat that may define themselves and their future, or just curiosity. I mulled over my decision based on my thought process. West Point had given us a magnificent education. In most ways, it was at an individual level of military training, including a month with an active-duty unit in the summer between junior/cow year and senior/firstie year. But we lacked the most challenging leg of the triad – experience in a combat and complicated weapons environment.

I knew I was well educated and somewhat trained militarily, but I needed additional training at the basic courses in the Army and my first unit. However, I did not have a foundation to evaluate a unit from a personnel and capability perspective. I did not know how valuable the Non-Commissioned Offer Corps (NCO) was to make a platoon, company, or troop successful — I lacked EXPERIENCE.

So, I talked with my father, a Transportation Corps Colonel, and several Armor officers since picked Armor as my branch. They were open and wise and led me to select Germany as my first assignment to get experience. This decision helped later in Vietnam. This is not to disparage my classmates who took a different route, but I was not supremely ready to lead men and women in combat immediately after graduation.

My first tour in Germany laid the foundation for my Army career in knowing and enforcing strict standards, hard training, missions in adverse weather, and the value of superbly trained NCOs for mission accomplishment and soldier development. When I deployed to Vietnam in 1972, I felt more comfortable leading in combat.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Do not leap forward immediately, especially when you will be responsible for lives in battle.

My pre-combat unit experience enabled me to look at a critical situation and, in real-time, backward plan for success. We had a unit that was in heavy contact and needed to be evacuated. I jumped into a Huey with another pilot and flew to the area. Along the way, we looked at areas where we could land in any emergency, taking note of the wind speed

and direction as we were fully fueled and would be heavier when we picked up passengers. The evacuation landing zone (LZ) was at the edge of a cliff, forcing us to approach and depart into the wind. So, our route was obvious to the enemy as well. On our third trip out of the LZ we received intense small-arms fire and sustained at least seven hits in the aircraft. Our master caution light came on, and the controls were becoming sluggish. On our way to the evacuation mission, we made a cautionary landing in one of the contingency areas we had identified. In quick order, we found the issue, sealed off the area with duct tape, and were able to fly back to a safe location.

After retirement to Florida, I trained with FEMA and established a Community Emergency Response Team for our gated community. Our team would handle medical, fire, and other issues when first responders were unavailable. (During hurricanes in Florida, some first responders do not deploy if the winds are excessive.) We supported during a number of hurricanes and a tornado where our team made a difference. We found an older couple in their house without food or much water for several days, and we saved them.

After storms, we assessed the damage and helped neighbors when needed. In one instance, I found a couple who had gone out to work on a clogged drain. As they approached the drain, I had them stop and go back. I had scanned the entire area and noted a downed power line near the drain, which could have electrocuted them. In addition, we found snakes within the drain area.

**LL #2:** Experience and looking at the big picture are helpful even in retirement.

### **Forward Observer Priorities**

**Robert (Mac) Love A-4 29000**

One thing that became quickly obvious to me as an artillery forward observer in Vietnam — if someone is shooting real bullets at you or if you are shooting real bullets at someone, then it's a critical, top priority. Otherwise, it's not.

This insight can apply in civilian life as long as you recognize the metaphorical “real bullets.”

So, since you are not a tree and find yourself in a position you don't want to be in, then get moving and do something about it.

## Advisor in Vietnam

John Norton Jr. B-3 29307

The sound of incoming mortar and artillery is unforgettable. Depending on how far an enemy is from you, you first hear a distinct thump in the distance, then a quiet pause while the round is in the air, headed your way. In the final seconds before impact, you can hear it screaming into your area, followed by the round exploding and the ground violently shaking around you. Some say the rounds you don't hear are the ones that land on top of you.

The sun was coming up on July 9, 1972, when we heard such thumping. Seconds later, ten to fifteen enemy mortar rounds exploded around our hilltop position. The surprise attack quickly got everyone's attention. It was clear the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had zeroed in on the South Vietnamese Airborne battalion I was supporting.

I breathed heavily, sweat dripping down my face as I squeezed into the bottom of my foxhole. I prayed silently, hoping that the next round didn't land in the hole I shared with my 18-year-old Vietnamese RTO (Radio Telephone Operator). I watched him somewhat surprised and amused that he could sit there seemingly calm, waiting for the incoming round to impact. When I later asked him how he remained so relaxed he said in broken English, "Trung Hui (Lieutenant in Vietnamese), if a round lands on us, we're dead, nothing we can do. If it's your time to go, it's your time to go."

After about fifteen minutes, the barrage ended. We resumed improving the overhead cover on our foxholes and continued to eat breakfast, which consisted of a bowl of rice and some small sausage pieces with nuoc mam (pronounced "nook mom," a tasty, fermented fish sauce).

Finishing breakfast, the Vietnamese airborne battalion continued its attack from our hilltop northwest towards the hill in front of us, where we had seen the NVA moving into positions late the day before.

As we watched the lead South Vietnamese company proceed cautiously down the hill, we expected heavy fighting ahead. The company advanced for twenty minutes. When they neared the bottom, suddenly heavy NVA 51-caliber machinegun fire came from several different directions. The company commander came sprinting up the hill, "Trung Hui", (speaking to me), "We need help...need you to get some air on the enemy positions if we're going to be able to make the attack."

I immediately called my Senior Advisor, Captain Dave Fletcher, about two kilometers or 1.2 miles away, requesting close air support. He replied, "I'll relay the call." Within fifteen minutes, a forward air controller (FAC) contacted me. "Delta 4-6 (my call sign),

this is Covey 2-9 (two-niner, the FACs call sign). Understand you have troops in contact, requesting enemy locations.” I gave him the grid coordinates of the enemy positions on my map. “Will mark these with Willy Pete,” (white phosphorus rounds that produce white smoke) he replied, “need you to adjust on those.”

I made minor adjustments, and soon, our air support, consisting of two USAF A-10 aircraft, arrived, dropping bombs on top of the NVA positions. The subsequent bombardment and strafing lasted for several hours. At some point, I heard what sounded like excited Vietnamese voices speaking over my radio. I passed my handset to my counterpart, Maj Tanh, the Battalion XO (Executive Officer). I asked him, “Who is this (frequency), and what are they saying?”

He listened intently. “That’s the enemy. They’re using our frequency to speak to their higher headquarters.”

I furrowed my brow, “What are they saying?”

Tanh listened again. “They want to pull out, taking too many casualties.”

“And what are they being told?” Another moment passed.

“To stay put, that help is on the way.”

That reply created concern in me about what “help” might mean for our future.

As the afternoon drew close, the FAC radioed in, “This is Covey two-niner. I’m out of bombs, low on fuel, need to R-T-B (return to base).” The nearest military base was Da Nang Air Base which was about thirty minutes away by plane.

“Hope you have a quiet night. We’ll drink a couple of cold ones to you. Call if you need more help.”

Once the FAC was out of radio contact, the first of what seemed like several hundred enemy mortar and 130-millimeter artillery rounds began crashing down around us. Our hilltop felt like we were in a popcorn popper, with rounds continuously exploding for the next hour. I crouched in my two-man foxhole that fortunately had some overhead cover from timbers we had cut. On the right end of the position (facing the enemy) was Tanh, a battle-seasoned Major, and I was at the other end. Other fighting positions were similar to ours all around the top of the hill.

During the enemy bombardment, one of the mortar rounds landed on the front right corner of our foxhole, closest to Major Tanh. When the round exploded, we were engulfed in the blast that literally picked me up and slammed me down into the bottom of the foxhole.

My first reaction when the round went off was - *it's over*. Momentarily, I lost consciousness. Then, as I slowly regained my senses, I thought to myself, *where will I be*

*when I open my eyes?* As I slowly opened my eyes, I was grateful to be alive, still there in the foxhole, and equally amazed that I was still in one piece, unwounded.

But Major Tanh was slumped over while everything seemed in slow motion, with a loud ringing in my ears. The incoming mortar fire was still going on all around us. I thought he was likely dead since he was between me and the blast.

Slowly, Tanh began to stir. Then he looked up at me and gave me one of those bleary-eyed "whew, close call" looks. In the position next to ours was a good friend, LT Ky, and his RTO. They took a direct hit. Sadly, they were killed instantly. That is how close it was.

With a few radio calls, I reached an Air Force FAC. He located where the NVA was firing from and soon had a couple of F-4 Phantom Jets dropping 750 lb. bombs on the enemy firing positions.

At that point, the NVA had run out of ammo, or they decided they were not ready for another pounding, so the incoming fire stopped. All was quiet for a while. However, reports from our outlying security positions indicated enemy movement all around us at the bottom of our hill. It seemed likely that we were going to get hit by a major NVA attack that night. Considering the casualties we inflicted on them with our air strikes, I knew they were eager to even the score--although their mortar barrage seemed to do that. We had suffered seven killed and about thirty wounded.

As the sun went down, I assessed our ability to hold off a major attack and reflected on my afternoon experiences. I began to think about our casualties, how fragile life was, and the strong possibility that my time on earth might be getting short. I realized that if I wanted to stay around longer, I needed to do something significant that I had never done on the battlefield before.

Once the shooting stopped and things quieted down considerably, I climbed out of my foxhole and found a little thicket in the center of our perimeter where I could have some privacy. I got down on one knee and prayed, saying something like, "God, I'm not above giving my life for the Vietnamese people. But I feel I have a higher destiny in life--a greater calling of service. If you'll help us get out of this situation in one piece, I want You to know I am willing to dedicate my life to Your work." Then I thought, *Boy, that's a tall offer coming from me.*

I knew that this would be all-or-nothing promise. I was sincere about it. I remember thinking to myself, *what will this involve on my part? What would be God's work on earth? Is there any particular type of Christian service that God considers His own? What might I need to do to fulfill this commitment? Maybe become an Army Chaplain, a Baptist missionary, or a Catholic Priest?* Finally, the thought came: *Well, I don't know what it will be, God, but whatever it is, I'm willing to devote everything I have if You will help me and our unit get out of here alive.*

As I got back into my foxhole, it was starting to get dark. I felt better, although I was still expecting a long night. I had a 45-caliber pistol, my CAR-15 rifle locked and loaded, a couple of hand grenades, and my ruck and radios packed and ready to go. But, I was so emotionally exhausted from the day that I slumped against the side of our foxhole and dozed off.

The next thing I knew, Major Tanh was gently shaking me. I opened my eyes and to my amazement, it was dawn. The night had passed relatively quietly. There had been a few enemy probes here and there but no major attack.

Because of the number of casualties that we had suffered that day, we received orders to pull back to the southeast and evacuate our dead and wounded. I thought to myself then and again later that morning as we moved off the hilltop to a new, more secure position: *were we just lucky the enemy didn't attack during the night, or had my prayer been answered?* In any case, I was grateful that it seemed to have been answered.

That possibility became even more apparent when I landed about a month later back in the US at Travis Air Force Base. As the chartered World Airways 707 Freedom Bird taxied towards the arrival gate, not only did I feel elated that I had somehow made it home safely, but a little voice spoke inside of me saying, *"Now that you are home safely, what about that promise you made back in Vietnam?"* I answered myself, *Well if God has something He wants me to do, I'll be looking to see what that might be.*

**Lesson Learned:** In life and death situations, it's always good to pray and ask our Heavenly Father for help when the chips are down. At the same time, there will likely be something required in return. My commitment came during my next assignment at the U.S. Army Aviation School.

## **Recon Patrol in Vietnam**

### **Phillip Harris A-1 29145**

During 1971-1972 in Vietnam, I received Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) training and was assigned operational control to the 5<sup>th</sup> SF Group at Camp Snuffy, located very close to Cambodia.

The NCOs and soldiers in the team I was attached to had several tours and were extremely savvy about combat. They were also very supportive in training me. Their first lesson has stayed with me to this day, and its wisdom is ageless. To wit:

“Once the shooting starts in combat, ANYTHING can happen, and ANYTHING can be unforgiving and deaf to any excuses.”

## **Serving With Integrity in Vietnam**

**Ray (Sette) Cossette H-2 29092**

### **Dedication**

This story is respectfully dedicated to the men of the West Point class of 1970 who died in combat, mainly in the Republic of Vietnam. They gave their lives in service to their country, men who were in the prime of their youth. I am writing this homage as the 50th reunion of our class is approaching. Many of us have an ache in our hearts for our classmates who will not be with us to celebrate because they died in combat or later from effects they sustained in combat.

As one of our classmates wrote in a tribute to one of our fallen comrades, he said it well. “I loved you as a brother. I think of you often, and you are forever a young man. We have grown old and blessed with wonderful families. I only wish you would have grown old with us.” Another classmate continued by saying “You went and paid the ultimate price... Serve with integrity. You always did, my friend.”

We remember them, and in their memory, I share this story.

### **The Academy**

I was raised in San Diego in the 1960s, a tumultuous time in American history with street protests and riots on university campuses such as the Kent State massacre in 1970. My father was a retired Marine Corps officer who fought in the battle of Iwo Jima in the South Pacific in 1945. I lived the “good life” as a teenager in San Diego and afterward attended the Military Academy at West Point.

We all came from various parts of the country and entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in July of 1966. We were sworn in as new cadets and began summer training in “Beast Barracks.” It was three months of hell with little sleep and hardly any food.

All the upperclassmen were continually yelling at us: “hazing,” as it was known then. It was a time of extreme stress. About twenty percent of our classmates dropped out in the first three months. Our Class motto was, “Serve with Integrity, Class of ‘70.”



We graduated four years later as second lieutenants in June of 1970. Upon graduating, I volunteered to serve in the war in Vietnam. Then, we headed to Airborne School and Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. They called us Airborne Infantry Rangers.

Fifteen months after graduating from the Academy, on August 3, 1971, a large civilian jetliner began loading combat soldiers at Travis Air Force base in California. About 250 of us were soldiers from a buck private to major. We were headed to Cam Rahn Bay, a military airport just outside Saigon in the Republic of South Vietnam.

Five of my West Point classmates and I boarded together. We were all 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenants, having been recently promoted from 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenants. Quickly, the DC 8 roared down the runway as we headed to the battlefields of Vietnam on the South China Sea.

While in the air, I began asking myself why I volunteered for Vietnam. I was motivated by President John F. Kennedy's speech when he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

I wanted to serve my country after four years of military training and university education. However, the war in Vietnam was highly unpopular in America at that time. I was bothered by some of the violent protests by my generation against the war, but I would not let it stop me.

It was a long 24-hour flight to our destiny. We had lunch, a four hour movie, and some talk before I fell asleep. I woke up as the pilot announced we were preparing to land at Cam Rahn Bay Airport.

Thirty minutes later, I looked out my window and saw the perimeter lights. The outer set of oval lights was red, followed by a green set further inside, signaling the beginning of the safe zone around the airport. Quickly, we were on the ground, and it was dark.

We were greeted by several buses accompanied by two jeeps armed with M-60 machine guns. It finally dawned on me that we had arrived and were in a hostile combat zone. Then, we were transported to our temporary barracks for a week of in-country training. The training went quickly cramming us with information.

To this day, I remember well an hour-long demonstration on how to set up a mechanical ambush, or "MA," as they were commonly called. Typically, three claymore mines were placed about two meters apart and joined together by an electrical wire in one continuous circuit. Included was a small detonation battery attached to a trip string crossing the trail.

The primary use of the MA was against an enemy unit marching along a trail. The lead person would pull the trip cord, causing all three portable claymore mines to ignite at once, killing all in the kill zone. Usually, it was not a pretty sight. I needed to remember

how to install one in the weeks ahead, as it would be my platoon's responsibility to put out an MA near our fighting position every night at dusk.

### **Chu Lai**

All six of us, Lt.'s John Colacicco, Ed Hirsch, Lynn Rolf, Scott Knight, Les Kahalekai, and I, were eventually assigned to units in I Corps. It was the U.S. military's force positioned closest to the De-Militarized-Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Vietnam. Others from our Class of 1970 went to the southern parts of Vietnam.

We six were a band of brothers. You will hear more about them later, and I usually refer to them by their first names.

Only four of us were assigned to armored cavalry units in I Corps. They were John, Scott, Ed and myself. As a point of clarification, an armored cavalry troop in Vietnam usually had 15 to 20 armored tracked vehicles. Also, an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) are called tracks because they have metal rotating tracks and not rubber wheels. So, tracked vehicles can go about anywhere, including rice paddies and jungle terrain.



U.S. Army M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier

They also have the advantage of having armored protective plates to shield soldiers from the small arms fire from the Viet Cong. Each APC provided excellent firepower from its turret-mounted 50-caliber machine gun and two smaller M-60 machine guns on each side of the vehicle.

In this story, I refer to APCs as tracks and tanks as tanks. Usually, a lightweight tank in Vietnam was a Sheridan Tank. Our units were located around Da Nang, a major Vietnamese city.

John and I were transported by jeep to the same Armored Cavalry Squadron made up of several similar Cavalry troops. The only major exception to the organization of a Cavalry Squadron during that time could be a squadron that also included helicopter gunships like Cobras or troop carriers known as Hueys.

John and I were sent to the same squadron base camp located in Chu Lai, a small Vietnamese city just south of the much larger city of Da Nang. The next day, John and I flew by helicopter to meet our new troop commanders. Each commanded three cavalry (cav) platoons deep in Viet Cong (VC) territory near the South China Sea.

John was immediately put in charge of a cavalry platoon. He took it out on patrol the next day in his area of operation. Within several days, his unit was ambushed by a strong enemy force who dangerously caught his unit in the “kill zone.”

The VC opened up with RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) and automatic rifle fire. RPGs flew at the lead vehicle, a Sheridan Tank. John’s platoon sergeant, a well-experienced Vietnam veteran, was sitting on top of the tank. When the RPG hit the broad side of the Sheridan, it exploded and entered the interior of the tank. The energy of this exploding RPG round ignited the vehicle’s basic ammunition load.

In a flash, the tank erupted with violent flames. Unfortunately, the platoon sergeant and his crew were incinerated. This loss left John in charge of his whole platoon as they opposed a numerically superior enemy force.

During the battle, John was wounded in the head but radioed back to his Troop Commander, urgently requesting reinforcements. Soon, he learned that backup was on the way.

Scott, had his cav platoon nearby. Quickly, he was notified by radio that John’s platoon had been ambushed and could be overrun if not reinforced immediately. Our classmate immediately mobilized his platoon and reached John’s position just as they were about to be overrun by the VC. Scott’s unit entered the fight!

One of his mortar tracks began dropping mortar rounds on the enemy. Soon, the VC were overpowered, forcing them to rapidly retreat, while leaving behind John’s severely damaged platoon.

Medivac helicopters arrived next to transport John’s wounded men to the hospital. He was one of them. Later, he was awarded a Purple Heart for his injury and the Silver Star for valor. While appreciating the awards, he was more grateful to be alive and able to come back and fight another day.

About the same time, I was flying to join my new Cavalry Troop in the field patrolling the Vietnamese rice paddies along the South China Sea. Upon arrival, there was a commotion near the troop command track. A Vietnamese interpreter had stepped on a booby trap, and it blew his leg off. A medevac helicopter was called for. Within an hour, it was circling our site. Then, it flew the wounded man to Da Nang for emergency care to stop the bleeding.

After the medevac departed, my new Troop Commander, Captain Dan Cox, greeted me. He was a Class of '69 West Pointer, a year ahead of me from my same cadet company at the Academy, H-2. That night, he briefed me on the local situation and ordered my platoon to patrol the neighboring rice paddies near our unit.

The next day, I joined my platoon composed of five tracks, each manned by four men. My platoon sergeant, Staff Sergeant (SSG) Spivey, was a tall, muscular Afro-American whom I grew to respect immensely.

I felt the tension in the air as we patrolled hostile Viet Cong territory. It was muddy work trying to drive APCs through each 50 square meters of rice paddy. Most of the paddies were covered by ½ meter of water mixed with mud, contained by surrounding dikes. Stocks of rice grew through the water and mud mixture.

It was nightfall that evening when one of our light tanks, a Sheridan about fifteen tons in weight, bogged down in the rice paddy mud. We were forced to pull it out with steel cables and track-mounted winches. In our precarious position that night, I was concerned that the Viet Cong were going to start dropping mortar rounds on us.

SSG Spivey was in the mud much of the night, supervising the effort and reporting his progress to me by radio. Meanwhile, I stayed with the rest of the platoon, along with an attachment of about ten Vietnamese soldiers.

I had my hands full supervising these ten men. Once it got dark, they began to light fires to cook their suppers, which included rice dishes mixed with chicken or fish. I was not against them having a tasty meal. But the fires would give the VC a reference point to zero in their mortars or a ready target for a sniper.

For everyone's safety, I had to make the rounds, telling them in English to put out the fires. If they did not comply, we had to extinguish them ourselves, much to their chagrin, as they did not understand our English. As a result, we were not fired on that night, and no one was wounded in our camp or out in the rice paddies winching out our heavy tank.

I had two personal goals while serving in Vietnam during the last days of the Vietnam War. First was to do as directed. Second was ensuring that every man in my platoon returned to the United States or to their Vietnamese family, alive and unwounded.

The next night, my platoon was ordered to set out a mechanical ambush along a trail. Wisely, we sent a sniper team to spend the night on a hill nearby to watch and cover the ambush in case someone tried to booby-trap it with an enemy mine.

Early in the morning, we heard rifle fire from the sniper. I sent out two tracks to assist our forward team. But, the VC soldiers who were trying to booby trap our MA got away. Yet our sniper told us that he had wounded one of the VC so maybe we could follow the blood trail. However, we could not find any blood evidence.

Our brigade commander ordered us to put out two more MA's the following night. We had a soldier in my platoon who set up the mechanical ambushes for us. I told him he needed to do it. But he refused because of the booby trap incident we had in the morning with our previous MA.

Again, I ordered him to do it, but he refused again. After much discussion with Captain Dan and the soldier, he reluctantly agreed to do it or face a court martial for disobeying an order.

At about 1800 hours (6 p.m.) that evening, our two small APCs, led by me, noisily motored to the jungle edge to position the MA along a well-used path. I was uneasy with the noise of the diesel engines. Our secret operation needed to be set up in silence so anyone walking along the path we selected would not suspect the presence of the MA. However, I was sure we could be heard at least 200 meters away.

At the jungle's edge, we found a clearing. I radioed to my track commanders, "This is fine. Let's set it up here." Immediately, the track engines were cut off, so there was silence. While it was getting dark, I was sure we were being watched. I imagined the eyes of VC soldiers peering at us through the jungle forest from underneath their bamboo-woven hats.

Two men jumped off my vehicle and began placing the three claymore mines targeting the path. The silence was nerve-racking as I expected the forest to become lit with AK-47 gunfire. My men quickly connected the mines with copper electrical wires and then attached the wire to the detonation battery.

My tension at this point became almost intolerable because the last step was critical. If an electric pulse from the battery accidentally discharged into the mines, they would all explode, blasting small metallic pellets in all directions. Fortunately, there was only silence.

As my two men returned to my vehicle, each gave me a thumbs up. The MA was ready to explode if someone walking along the path tripped the detonation wire.

I then radioed my platoon, "Let's move out." Slowly but cautiously, our tracks motored toward the beach about two miles away. The sun had set, so the forest was dark. It was the first time since arriving in Vietnam that I felt ominously afraid. Minutes later,

my track commander spoke to me on my radio headset. He nervously communicated, “Lieutenant, we are in the middle of a VC minefield!”

*Dang it*, I silently exclaimed to myself. “How can you tell?”

The veteran of two previous tours in Vietnam answered. “We are surrounded by bamboo stakes driven into the ground.”

Through the darkness, I could see stakes sticking up about half a meter in height. “Hell, we have to back out the way we came in to avoid hitting a mine.” My tension and fear became excruciating as I feared the worst.

Suddenly, automatic gunfire overpowered the silence of the dark foreboding night. From the forest about 50 meters away, red and orange flashes of tracer rounds flew towards us. At the same time, four AK-47 rifle-mounted rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) came at us.



Tracer Fire Lighting Up The Night

Photo courtesy of the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service

Seemingly in slow motion, I watched white propellant smoke from two of the rockets zoom by us. It was like I was in a dream as I gazed at them. Simultaneously, another rocket hit the sand to the right front of the track I was riding on, spraying sand up into my face. I knew the VC had us in the kill zone, and we could be destroyed quickly if we did not react appropriately and immediately.

My track commander excitedly radioed to our driver. “Get the hell out of here!”

The driver forcefully gunned the idling diesel engine, and our track lunged forward. I was sitting on top of our track as usual to avoid the possible explosion from ground mines. The sudden movement forward catapulted me through the large 4-foot by 6-foot opening in the track roof. I dropped onto stored ammunition boxes. while my headset-to-radio connection ripped apart.

I was horrified. I had lost communication with the rest of my platoon. Plus, in the belly of the track, I had disappeared from my soldiers' sight. I did not want them to think I was hiding inside the track out of fear. *What can I do now?* I thought. Quickly, I grabbed a black M-16 rifle lying nearby. I rose out of the hole I was in and began firing at the jungle around us.

In Army terms, this is known as "recon by fire." The intent was to draw fire from enemy troops hiding in the nearby bushes or trees. That action helped identify enemy locations as they fired back.

Meanwhile, my track commander ordered our driver to stop and turn toward the enemy firing at us. From the intensity of the gunfire, I estimated that we had been ambushed by a squad of at least eight Viet Cong.

After our track rotated right, we were facing in the direction of the ambushers with our large 50-caliber machine gun firing at flashes of gunfire. The 50-caliber was our best weapon. So overpowering were the large 50-cal rounds they could destroy any bunker or a tree someone was hiding behind.

As my gunner fired the 50-caliber, it jammed. Quickly working on the ammunition feed, the gunner tried to clear the jam. I looked behind us towards our other track. They, too, had stopped firing in the direction of the enemy. Their large 50-caliber was also locked up probably because the ammo belts did not feed correctly up from the floor of the track to the gun.

Malfunctioning weapons are any officer's nightmare. Sitting in the middle of the kill zone, we could not return fire with our largest weapons, which could neutralize any enemy when working — no matter where they were hiding.

*Why in the hell is this happening?* I wondered. Recently, we were on the shore and test-fired our guns into the empty blue sea. Everything worked fine then.

Frantically, I began yelling at everyone as if that would do any good. In seconds, both large machine guns began barking return fire.

Though it wasn't comical then, simultaneously, Platoon Sergeant Spivey grabbed his M-16 rifle with his right hand and was shooting it like a pistol. Being such a big man, that was no problem for him.

Amidst all the chaos, I reattached my communication line and radioed Captain Dan with our larger troop on the beach. I quickly explained our situation and told him I would call in American artillery support.

He replied, "Proceed!"

Next, I called the artillery firebase about ten miles away. "Fire mission, over! Enemy troops in the open; coordinates, 3242 5724." Silence.

Then, “This is Firebase Thomas. Be advised you are in the gun-to-target line of fire. Request denied, over.” (A gun-to-fire line means that your unit is in the path of incoming artillery rounds. Thus, they can destroy a friendly unit if they fall short or do not land right on the target.)

My heart sank. The enemy was all around us, and I could not get fire support. At that point, I did not know what we were up against. It could be at least a company of VC of about 100 men or even more.

I thought rapidly and retorted, “Request illumination, over!”

“Roger, rounds on the way. Over.”

About two minutes later, phosphorous-illuminating projectiles began exploding overhead, lighting up the battlefield. Meanwhile, both tracks kept firing with all machine guns, much to the credit of my men, who reacted quickly and unjammed their weapons in the dark.

With machine guns now effectively firing, it was apparent the VC had lost fire superiority and left the scene. I radioed to my platoon, “Let’s get out of here and head to the beach.” Luckily, we avoided any mines in the minefield.

When we reached the beach and the rest of our troop, I briefed Captain Dan on what had happened. He said, “We could see all the gunfire. Your platoon did a good job, Ray. Go ahead and join your platoon and grab something to eat.”

We had 16 tracks in our troop of about 85 men, including Captain Dan. The whole contingent of track vehicles was set up in a “laager position.” It is a fortified circle of tracks about ten meters apart.

That type of defensive position goes back to the frontier days of the old West just after the conclusion of the American Civil War. At the end of the day’s journey in frontier times, the “wagon master” would yell out “laager up.” Then, the covered wagons formed a circle.

So, it was with our modern troop of 16 vehicles. At the end of patrolling enemy terrain, Captain Dan would radio the platoon leaders to “Laager up!” The three platoons would line up nose to tail and form 1 large circle with a 50-meter diameter. Next, we placed RPG screens, made of heavy wire metal fencing, in front of our tracks to deflect any incoming enemy RPGs. Then, we felt secure for the night in the midst of Viet Cong territory.

Upon returning to my command track, I saw most of the men in our troop eating C-rations, an assortment of meals in a can, like ham and eggs or beans and franks. But I did not want to eat. I was still on an adrenaline rush from the ambush about 2 hours earlier. Instead, I felt like vomiting because of the adrenalin.



After eating, my men began preparing for the night. Each would pull a 2-hour shift on guard on top of their respective track or tank. They would watch closely for Victor Charlie trying to penetrate our heavily gunned perimeter. If the enemy succeeded, it could be terminal for us. That's why I never let my soldiers go to sleep while on guard.

So, I took a position in my APC, standing in the middle of it, knowing that it would be a long night for me. I slept lightly, not wanting some VC to place a knife to my throat or even worse.

If I did find one of my soldiers asleep on their track during their guard duty, I would bring them before my 6-foot-4-inch 280-pound platoon sergeant, whom they respected immensely. He would reprimand them verbally, sometimes for twenty minutes at a time.

As expected, the night for me was a long one as I attempted to recount everything that occurred during the ambush. That evening, I had only been in the Vietnam war zone for two weeks. I realized there were people here who hated us fiercely and wanted to kill us. That day, we were very fortunate to have made it through the ambush alive. Especially since the VC had us in the kill zone not more than 50 meters away. None of my men were wounded.

Then I began to question myself, *Why were we here in the first place? Despite all the criticism back in the U.S., were we accomplishing something beneficial?* Then I thought, *Wasn't South Vietnam still free from the aggression of North Vietnam and its communist allies with our help?*

My mind then wandered to my father's service in the Marine Corps on the island of Iwo Jima during World War II. He did not talk much about losing two-thirds of his Marine company, including his best friend, during 34 days of fighting the Japanese. He was wounded three times and received the Purple Heart. I admired him for his service to our country and to the Marine Corps. Over the years, my father became my best and closest friend and someone I trusted.

As a young teenager, I revered his military service in WW II. When I told him I wanted to become a military officer like him, he said 'In that case you should go to West Point, which I did.

Deep in thought, I realized I needed to make the rounds, checking on my soldiers to ensure they were awake, especially with aggressive VC around. The long dark, night passed slowly. Daylight came about 6 a.m. Everyone in the camp began to stir as we prepared again to reconnoiter the area for the presence of VC soldiers.

Captain Dan approached me and said, "Ray, I want you to take your whole platoon (5 tracks) to the area where you were ambushed last night." I answered, "Yes Sir," glad to have the long night over and eager to confirm who ambushed us, knowing it was VC soldiers.

I briefed my platoon on what we were going to do. The men were willing to learn who ambushed us and also up for a fight. Minutes later, all my tracks were running and waiting for the order to proceed.

We drove cautiously inland in the direction of where the ambush occurred. All of my men wanted to make sure that there was no larger VC unit waiting to attack us again. After travelling for fifteen minutes, we reached the small village near the ambush site. Five grass huts formed a community circle. Their meagerness demonstrated the extreme poverty the people of the war-torn country were enduring.

Unsurprisingly, there were no men and no Viet Cong present. Most likely, the village men did not want us to suspect they were part of the ambush.

Only women came out to meet us, some with small children in their arms. The women were all crying with eyes full of hatred and fear. At that point, my track commander radioed me, "Lt, let's shoot this place up."

At the suggestion of such a heinous and inhumane act, my mind raced to the recent accusation of a massacre by an American unit. Supposedly, a platoon in C Company, 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade commanded by Lt. Calley, had killed 109 Vietnamese, including women and children, at My Lai, about fifteen kilometers from where we were.

I radioed back, "Negative, absolutely not!" Then, I radioed Captain Dan with a status report. I also asked him how we should proceed. He told me to complete my assigned patrol and then return to the area next to the beach.

I never returned to the field. My unit in Chu Lai was ordered to stand down and turn over our armored tracks to the Vietnamese Army. It was part of President Nixon's plan for "Vietnamization" in 1972. The intent of the plan was to prepare the country to fight and win its own war against the Communist North and its allies of China and the Soviet Union.

### **Da Nang Again**

I was no longer a field platoon leader commanding an armored cavalry platoon in combat. I was promoted to Executive Officer Bravo Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Squadron, near Da Nang. There, I joined up with my 1970 classmates, Ed and John, who were platoon leaders in Bravo Troop.

Along with the Troop Commander, Captain Ernest Bubb, West Point Class of 1969, I was responsible for administrative tasks and maintaining discipline. My focus was resupplying our Cav Troop with ammunition, supplying vehicle maintenance parts, and delivering hot food daily, usually via helicopter.

During the next six months, one of my recurring responsibilities was being the duty officer in charge of our large base camp defensive perimeter during the night. It was an

important responsibility as the VC often probed our perimeter to see if there was a weak spot where they could attack and gain entrance into the camp.

Since our camp was home to four armored cavalry troops when not in the field, this would be a strategic objective for a VC sapper attack. A sapper attack would happen when three or four daring semi-naked VCs would strap TNT to their body and then cut through the perimeter barbed wire fence under the cover of darkness. These men could become very creative risk-takers trying to get inside our perimeter.

I was told by another duty officer of an attempt by a sapper to get inside Camp Eagle near Hue in the north. It was the home of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. The duty officer received a call late one night from guards on the perimeter, requesting his immediate presence at their bunker. When the officer reached the bunker, he asked, "What's up?"

The men explained, "Sir, there is a large dark barrel about 100 meters in front of us, and it is moving slowly towards us."

Having trouble believing them, the duty officer began watching the barrel. "You are right," he said. "It is moving towards us. There must be someone in the barrel pushing it along."

The duty officer notified all the other guards in that area of the possible intruder. "On my command, fire on the barrel with rifles, machine guns, and grenade launchers."

When he ordered, "Fire!" the whole perimeter opened up with a roar of gun fire and bright tracer rounds and exploding grenades. The barrel was no more.

Once sappers penetrated inside a camp undetected, they would race through the whole area, setting off their explosives on valuable weapons or sleeping quarters. That would create havoc and could mean several soldiers killed and equipment destroyed.

To prevent penetrations, sandbagged bunkers were built around the perimeter about ten meters apart. From each bunker, two to four soldiers would watch for sappers and repel their sneak attack or any frontal assault on the camp.

If one did occur, the base alarm would go off. Immediately, regardless of the time of day, troops would pour out of their barracks and run to the Squadron armory or weapons room. Quickly, in a file, each soldier would pass the weapons room door and usually be issued an M-16 rifle with a clip or magazine of ammunition. The soldier would then race to his assigned perimeter area to engage any enemy approaching or within the base camp.

As the officer in charge at night, it would be my responsibility to initiate the alarm and then report to the Squadron Commander for additional orders. If quiet, it was my job to travel around the perimeter with a truck carrying food and coffee to feed our guards, to keep them awake, and verify they were not sleeping.

Meanwhile, I was hoping I did not get shot by a sniper, as many of the perimeter lights were on so we could see any VC trying to sneak up on our position. Unfortunately, the enemy could also see us.

I enjoyed talking with our guards while making my rounds. Some excellent conversations would occur after asking a soldier, “How are you doing? Have you seen any movement of VC out there?” Or “Are you getting enough to eat?”

One of these questions often opened the door to a discussion with the young guards. They would relish the opportunity to talk with an officer to express any concerns or complaints. It was an excellent way to understand what issues were on their minds and a good way to determine troop morale.

One night, as I was about to leave a defensive bunker, an Afro-American soldier from my troop named Richard Wood asked to talk with me alone. “Lt,” he said, “can I be honest with you?”

I answered, “Sure, go ahead, Private. What is it?”

“Sir, I have recently returned from the Long Bin drug Rehab Center after testing positive on a urine test for heroin.”

I stayed quiet, knowing the seriousness of his concern. Heroin was an addictive narcotic drug made from morphine. I knew some of our troops often used it by inhaling or snorting a half vial or more for a sensation of euphoria. Or they did it as a release from the daily boredom, tedium, or stress during combat operations. It left those soldiers constantly needing sleep. Thus, whether guarding the base camp or out in the field, they could not stay awake at night. This operational weakness was extremely dangerous for all of us in country.

Richard went on to say, “Sir, it is everywhere. Lots of the guys are using it, and the locals are even throwing it over the fence, hoping to get a couple of dollars in return.”

In some ways, it was amazing that almost pure heroin tossed over the fence for around two dollars a vial could sell for 200 dollars on the streets of a big city like New York.

He continued, “Sir,” I think the Viet Cong are doing this. They want to get us hooked so we can’t be good soldiers and do our job.”

I thought, *He has a good point.* Some power had to be subsidizing this heroin supply to make it readily available and cheap for our soldiers to obtain and use.

“Sir, they told me at the Rehab Center that I would be helped in getting off of smack (heroin). They also told me that they would help me kick the habit. But if I tested positive again on a urine test after being released clean from the program, then I would be discharged from the army with a dishonorable discharge. Sir, I don’t want to go home with

that type of discharge. I would be a disgrace to my family and would not be able to get a good job. I want to kick this terrible addiction.”

I asked him, “Private Wood, is there anything I can do to help?”

“Talking helps, Sir.”

I met with him several times afterward, always at his request. I tried to encourage him in his struggle against using heroin.

In time, our cavalry squadron was deactivated, and all our troops sent home. I hoped Private Wood successfully made the transition back to the United States. I never knew for sure as we went to separate units after our squadron stood down.

I have always felt compassion for homeless men I have met on the streets in America. Especially when I learned they were Vietnam veterans. Then, my memory would return to Private Wood, triggering me to wonder *how he is doing now?* Hopefully, he has a wonderful wife, a good job, and children he loves.

### **Going Home to San Diego**

On April 6, 1972, John, Ed, and I boarded an American passenger jet in Da Nang with other soldiers going home. The plane was headed to Travis Air Force Base in California, where our Vietnam journey began.

As we were preparing to leave that day, our hearts were heavy when we learned that one of our classmates, Scott Knight, had been seriously wounded by a land mine and lost a leg.

The news about Scott was fresh in my mind when we landed at Travis Air Force base and quickly shuttled to Oakland Airport for our flights home. Mine was to San Diego. A young red-haired woman protestor was at the Oakland airport waiting to see returning soldiers. Cursing and pointing her finger at us, she called out, “You baby killers should be ashamed of yourselves!”

My heart fell to my stomach as I still felt the sadness of what harm Scott had endured. It quickly became anger as I thought, *Lady, if you only knew what happened to my classmate who had his leg blown off recently in Vietnam.*

In haste, I rushed for my flight home to San Diego, glad to be away from the protestors. It was quiet on the plane. No one was protesting now. I had changed into civilian clothes to avoid an unpleasant encounter in San Diego like I just had in Oakland.

I noticed many of the passengers were young people reading textbooks. I assumed they were students returning to San Diego State University or UCSD. It seemed surreal to me that I was flying across the Pacific Ocean the day before with a plane full of soldiers while these students were on Spring break.

During the plane flight, I remembered talks with my father about World War II and the heroic welcome home most veterans received when they returned from the war. The ungrateful reception we had received in Oakland and that many other Vietnam Veterans received was unjust, unkind, and un-Christian. But I knew my family would be at the San Diego airport with hugs and kisses to greet me.

Then, I settled back into my airline seat and began to reflect on my year in Vietnam. *Did I make a difference?* I know I met my personal goal of keeping the men under me alive and no one severely wounded. The bigger question was, *Did America's presence in Vietnam make a difference?*

I know that during the time I was there in 1972, our American military helped prevent Communist North Vietnam from being able to take over South Vietnam. The spread of communism in Indochina had been blunted at that time.

When my flight landed, I walked up the gangplank and found my father, mother, and sister Marty, grinning and waving.

Scott, by the way, did not give up. His amputated leg healed partially, and doctors saved the other leg, which was also wounded. Seizing the initiative, Scott became an army major in the Judge Advocate General Corps.

### **Years later, Convention in Dallas-Fort Worth**

In 1985 I attended a Christian Convention of about 2,000 people in Dallas-Fort Worth. At the start of the convention, Kenneth Copeland began his address to the crowd by saying, "Would all the veterans of the Vietnam War please stand on your feet."

I stood.

Copeland added, "I think all of us here need to thank these men for their service to us and America in the Vietnam War."

The whole crowd then began singing a hymn. I believe it was "God Bless America." After the song, the speaker said to the audience, "Please select a veteran near you and start praying for them."

Remarkably, as in the Oakland Airport fifteen years earlier, a young, pretty, red-haired woman now put her hand on my shoulder and began praying for me. "Lord, thank you for this man and the service and sacrifice he has made serving our country. Bless him in the name of Jesus."

No one had ever thanked me for going to Vietnam. My eyes began to water as she prayed. Gradually, the spirit of shame, rejection, and condemnation placed on me by that young red-haired woman in the Oakland Airport vanished. I felt free of her cursing and condemnation. It was like a heavy evil spirit left me, and I was free. Again, I was glad I decided to volunteer for Vietnam, serving my country as many classmates did and have

done since graduation day in June 1970. Each served America and our military with integrity and honor. Some even gave their lives in combat.

**Senior Editor's Comment:** I received Ray's life experience two weeks before he died. He never let on about his health condition. So, during initial editing, I did not get his lessons learned before or after his tour of duty in Vietnam. Thus, the following lessons learned are guesses at what he might have included based on what he wrote above. I offer them because Ray felt this class project was important for future graduates. Despite his physical difficulties, he overcame them to ensure this life experience was received to be merged into this eBook.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Choose why you are fighting during whatever combat, border zone, or security operation you are on. Then, go beyond that personal decision and set your goals on what you seek to accomplish for the men and women assigned to you.

**LL #2:** Commonly, combat comes with uncontrolled surprises. To survive, you must not freeze. Instead, lead by example by selecting a course of action, communicating it to the rest of your unit, and then take action.

**LL #3:** God and faith can be found on the battlefield and will strengthen you. Fulfill any wartime promises to God after you survive and hostilities end.

**LL #4** Serving with integrity includes complying with the Geneva Convention on humanitarian treatment of non-combatants and enemy prisoners. Do not let your integrity and humanity toward others be tarnished for life by combat stress and anger over the losses of cherished comrades. Honor those comrades by being a righteous warrior.

## Anti-Vietnam Demonstration

Paul Cunningham F-1 29164

In 1971, my platoon in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division was dispatched to the Washington, D.C. area, to help local law enforcement units control any May Day demonstrations and potential riots against the United States' participation in the Vietnam War. It was not a pleasant trip since we needed to practice riot control procedures, which were not usually part of the training for paratroopers. It was hot and dusty, and most of us were in a foul mood from the long periods of practice.

When the time for possible deployment to the city streets arrived, we inspected the troops to ensure they had the necessary equipment, and looked like a highly disciplined military unit. During that inspection, I found several of my soldiers had very dusty boots. I had a shoe brush with me and moved down the ranks, cleaning their boots. A commander noticed what I was doing and immediately stopped me, directing me to make the troopers clean their own boots.

My actions were guided by the principle, that as a leader, it was my job to serve those under my command. That was not the commander's view. After returning to Fort Bragg, a few soldiers made positive comments about my part in the incident.

One reason why I left the Army was because many leaders acted as though their subordinates served them rather than the reverse. I thought this might be different in civilian life. Unfortunately, my experience only sporadically met my expectations. However, this did not diminish my commitment to provide those who worked for me with everything to ensure their success rather than mine. I still have my shoe brush at the ready.

**Lesson Learned:** A leader needs to decide to what degree he serves his subordinates, the unit, and the mission, versus how the subordinates serve him, the unit, and the mission.

## Which War To Fight

Alan Brace C-4 29450

Christmas 1971, found Company B 1/327 Inf/ 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Airmobile) in Southeast Asia with my platoon on a security patrol sweep around our encampment at Phu Bai, Vietnam. We stopped a man, probably in his 50s, dressed in peasant clothing. As best we could tell, he was walking to his plot of land to tend crops. When we searched



him, we only found his lunch, a pad of rice wrapped in a banana leaf, and his pouch of *nuk mam* (homemade peppered hot sauce). He seemed to be no threat to our unit or mission.

We concluded that he was a simple farmer who spent his life taking caring for his family by raising enough food to get by. It didn't seem to matter to him who would win the military war or be in control of the government. His daily struggles and his lot in life would not change. Protecting and feeding his family was the more important war to him.

We let the Vietnamese peasant pass, realizing we would never know what would happen to him and his family.

### **Autopilot Response**

**Scott Knight F-1 29077**

During the winter of 1972 I was in the Republic of Vietnam, leading a patrol 20 kilometers southwest of Da Nang, providing security for an explosive demolition (EOD) team. I was a platoon leader on our last mission in Vietnam.

The mission was to detonate or remove landmines left by the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division without the benefit of the survey, which showed their location. My troop commander emphasized this mission's importance when he indicated that Vietnamese children from the neighboring village were being killed or maimed by inadvertently detonating these mines as they played along the railroad tracks.

Later, onsite, we slowly moved along behind the 4-man EOD team that had two men probing and two using electronic detectors ( 1 density & 1 metal). Suddenly, I felt a deafening explosion from behind me and saw stars.

Instantly, everything was surreal . . . sounds were distant and seemed to be traveling through a tunnel. I saw double at first and slow motion as my legs gave way, and I fell to the ground, unable to get back up. The smell of cordite was heavy in the air.

It took a moment to regain my senses. I surveyed the area. Some members of my patrol were standing like deer in headlights. I barked some commands, and they crouched down and secured the area. Next, I called for the medic to aid those most seriously injured. Behind me was Olson, my M-60 gunner from Minneapolis, who had been following me but a few feet to one side. His machine gun served to hold him in a supine position. Both his legs were missing above the knees. I directed "Doc" to go to him first, but our medic was seriously injured, too.

Seeing no evidence of enemy presence, getting medevacs for the injured was the highest priority. I tried to call for help, but my radio was dead. As my own RTO, I struggled to get the PRC-25 radio off my back. It was embedded with shrapnel. After field stripping the radio and reattaching the battery, I got a squelch when I keyed the mike.

I reported our status to the troop commander and requested a medevac. While conversing with him, I could hear in the background each time he spoke the characteristic “wop-wop” of a Huey’s rotor blade every time it broke the sound barrier. Realizing the troop was being resupplied, I asked that the resupply bird be diverted to our location ASAP.

It was the first to arrive and take the most seriously injured to safety. My platoon sergeant took command of our patrol as I departed on the second medevac chopper.

**Lesson Learned:** The most important lesson was the significance of training. It enabled me to do what was needed . . . almost on autopilot.

### **Troubled 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant**

#### **Dominick (Dom) Crea G-4 29493**

I was six months into my tour in Vietnam. For the first five months, I was the platoon leader for five squads of Quad 50 machine guns deployed in the Central Highlands around Pleiku.

Now, I was the Executive Officer at Battery Headquarters in Tuy Hoa, formerly an Air Force base. Think seaside, air conditioning with indoor plumbing versus Artillery Hill, mosquito nets, and outhouses.

Late one afternoon, while enjoying a steak and brews at the Officers Club, one of the clerks, a shake and bake SGT Knudsen, calls me to tell me the new in-country 6-foot 6-inch, 280-pound First Sergeant is drunk and out of control in the Orderly Room.

While jogging to the Battery HQ, on the beach about a quarter mile away, I wonder what to do.

When I arrive at the Quonset hut’s front door, I hear this bear of a man bellowing expletives about the Army and Vietnam. I quickly realized that I was no match for the bigger man.

I entered the front door at a forced march gait, and found four or five apprehensive soldiers arrayed around the orderly room. Without breaking my stride straight toward the back door of the Quonset Hut I gave an order. "Top, see me outside."

Ten or fifteen seconds later, this giant of a man appears at the back door as if shot by a tranquilizer gun and sheepishly says, "Yes, Sir." I replied something to the effect: "You're out of control. Go to your room." He did, and nothing more was said or done about his behavior that day.

From that point on, Top, who had been a bit oppositional to me and not happy to be in country, changed his attitude and actions to what is required of a First Sergeant.

**Lesson learned:** Don't confront an angry bear among his cubs. Discretion is the better part of valor.

## Special Aviation Mission, Pleiku VN

### Terry Johnson D-3 29347

In 1973, the II Corps Commander based on the Pleiku Airforce Base in the central highlands of Vietnam had a special crew to fly his specially configured UH-1H helicopter.

The aircraft had twin M2 50-caliber machineguns rather than the lighter M-60, 7.62mm. The "special" crew consisted of an Instructor Pilot, usually a senior warrant officer with many flight hours, and a rotating commissioned lieutenant. This practice was intended to give lieutenant aviators two-weeks experience with VIP missions, as well as exposure to the general.

It was late in the war, and it was my turn as part of the special crew flying before, during and after the approaching ceasefire from 15 to 26 January. This meant that I left my hooch at Camp Holloway and moved to more accommodating quarters in the II Corps Headquarters. There, we were on 24-hour call to fly the Commanding Officer or his staff either to safety or on a specified mission.

For most of 1972 and the beginning of 1973, Pleiku AFB was rocketed by the Viet Cong or NVA regulars. The enemy created what we called "rocket boxes," in the fields and jungles around Pleiku. Then, they fashioned crude rocket launchers capable of being fired manually or by wire or radio or, more often with simple timers. The targets were parked airplanes and helicopters, the runway, as well as ammunition and fuel sites. The rockets seldom hit anything directly due to their free flight trajectories and primitive aiming devices.

Nevertheless, the rockets were real. Big ones like the 122mm could cause serious damage and produce casualties. During the Christmas bombing of Hanoi and in the weeks following, the enemy stepped up the rocket attacks launching several at a time, annoyingly right around 1700 hours. At the II Corps Headquarters, early warning from airborne

observers would trigger alarm sirens alerting all personnel to don protective gear and head for the bunkers.

The Army had launched countless missions to counter these attacks. Ground patrols, aerial reconnaissance, and extensive intelligence collection produced near-term information. However, on the ground searches only found rudimentary bamboo stands flattened by the launched rockets. So, none of the enemies emplacing them were caught. Plus, bombs, rockets, and artillery were largely ineffective against such elusive targets.

My special-crew Aircraft Commander was a Chief Warrant Officer Three, Rich Clover, an experienced Huey Instructor Pilot, and an accomplished pool shark. Our routine when these attacks occurred was for me and the enlisted crew to rush to the aircraft, untie the rotor, and begin the runup. The IP would get weather and intelligence and file a hasty flight plan, racing to the aircraft to jump into the right seat before launching. Normally, we had to reposition from our hover hole parking spot to the II Corps “Hot Pad,” located just west of the headquarters.

During one of these attacks, I grabbed my helmet, vest, and weapon and ran toward the aircraft. Rockets started impacting on the airfield maybe a hundred meters away. Our Huey was in a depression surrounded by trees with a four-foot-high bunker complex on one side. I leapt from the bunker almost exactly in synch with a rocket’s blast. I landed hard and my left knee buckled in a partial dislocation I’d experienced many times in sports and training.

As usual, the pain was excruciating, and my body wanted to go into shock. This time, I picked myself up, seeing eyes staring at me from the bunker without any movement to come to my assistance. Driven by the mission, I limped to the aircraft, untied the rotor, and climbed into the left seat. I strapped in and began the startup checklist, getting the rotor up to full operating speed when the IP arrived.

He looked at me and said, “You look awful white, sir! Are you all right?”

After he plugged in his helmet I explained my injury. He took the controls and skillfully lifted our heavy bird out of the hover hole and repositioned to land on the pierced steel planking of the Hot Pad. We got radio instructions to shut down and wait. This enabled me to get out and test my damaged knee.

I could stand on it with pain and could bend it to a degree. My color returned and I knew I’d be ace bandaged up that night. Nothing new. I just dreaded being grounded.

When the All Clear sounded, HQ released us to return to our parking spot. It was a short flight followed by a steep approach into our hover hole. I asked the CW3 Instructor Pilot to let me fly just to verify I could still do it.

We ran the aircraft up and I took the controls. The IP called “off the pad” and I took off turning right to climb to about 200 feet and then left for a base course to final landing. I set up for the approach and turned final milking off airspeed and altitude as we’d been taught to make a steep landing. When you are flying a heavy Huey, and this one was especially heavy with both fifties and full fuel, the controls need to be very carefully manipulated to maintain a powered descent and avoid an abrupt maneuver at the bottom. The IP sat with his hands in his lap as I continued my descent.

Coordinating helicopter controls is an art. The collective on the left controls power. The cyclic is the control stick in the center on a Huey that controls the tilt of the rotor which governs movement forward, backward, and left and right. The pedals are slaved to the tail rotor to counter the torque from the main rotor and turn the nose left and right in a hover. All these controls need to be synchronized. Pulling power on the collective, for example, requires pushing some left pedal.

At about 15 feet on final I needed to pull in a bit of collective power to slow our descent. Normally, we instinctively apply left pedal at the same time. This time, my left leg was a hair slow, and the nose of the Huey snapped sharply to the right before I regained control. The IP did not move. I set it down and breathed a sigh of relief.

The flight surgeon put me on crutches for a day and, fortunately, we didn’t get called to fly while I recovered.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** When the rockets fly don’t be surprised if no one comes to your assistance. I know that is not the case in small units or within an aircrew. But, the people in the bunker were not motivated to risk themselves when I went down.

**LL #2:** You can fight through pain to accomplish the mission.

**LL #3:** Thank God for men like our CW3 IP whose professionalism and competence cannot be overstated. Another type of instructor might have refused to take the chance on me. My confidence and respect for him remains eternal.

**LL #4:** Asked if I got a Purple Heart for my combat injury, I vehemently said “NO!” I’d seen too many seriously wounded and dead soldiers to dare accept such an award for such a minor inconvenience.

## Listen to Your NCOs

Charles McGee A-4 29301

I still recall the words, “Back-Up!” from 50+ years ago, coming from the wisdom of an experienced Non-Commissioned Officer. That expression continues to remind me of a clear, sunny late afternoon in the middle of nowhere, Vietnam.

Not long after arriving in Vietnam in 1971, I was at one of our firebases adjacent to an abandoned airfield in the Dak To/Tan Canh area about 40 miles north of Pleiku in the Central Highlands.



We received a call to go to Ben Het, where several of our twin 40mm “Dusters” guns were providing support. Three of us – driver, NCO, and me - got in a jeep, drove into a setting sunset on a dusty, dirty, “kind-of” road, headed for Ben Het about 15 miles northwest. The road to Ben Het and its Ranger Camp was located within sight of the convergence of the three national borders of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It was not the safest place on earth.

About halfway there, the jeep suddenly bounced off some obstacle that forced us off the dirt road with the malicious intent of inflicting harm on us. Fortunately, we landed on all four wheels.

After quickly checking that we were all OK, I motioned to the driver to go forward. Sitting in the back of the jeep, Staff SGT Crump quickly and firmly said, “Hold-On.” Then, with all due respect, he said, “Hey, LT, we know what’s behind us, but we don’t know what’s in front of us. I recommend we back up onto the road and go from there.” *Great suggestion.* We arrived safely.

**Lesson Learned:** Relish the wisdom of your experienced NCOs.

## Enlisted Day Off In Vietnam

Terry Johnson D-3 29347

On Christmas Day, 1972, I was a UH-1 pilot in the 57<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company, based at Camp Holloway, near the central highlands city of *Pleiku* in the II Corps sector of Vietnam.

To give our enlisted crewmembers a day off, officers would fly a mission filling every crew position. On one such mission, I was the right door gunner. Another First Lieutenant (Odie Knight) was in the other bay in the crew chief's position. Our job included letting the pilots know the clearance status when landing or taking off, what we saw during the flight, and firing our weapons if needed.



Left to Right: 1LT Odie Knight Crew Chief/left-side door gunner. Right seat Pilot Captain Jim Orahod (USMA 1968). Left seat Co-pilot Mike Kuruzar. The right picture is my M60 as seen looking down from about 2,000 feet at the rice paddies and jungle below.

Our UH-1 sat in a revetment with walls eight feet-high to protect it from enemy fire. Our Christmas crew showed up at the helicopter at 0700 and all four of us pilots pitched in to complete the preflight inspection. I wore a regular unmarked field jacket over my flight suit because it got cold in the back bays with the doors open at altitude.

We took off from Camp Holloway on the south side of the main Pleiku Airfield and flew around to the pickup pad at the II Corps Headquarters on the other side. On the way, Knight and I made sure our weapons were safe with no ammunition in the loading trays. We would load them later.

After landing on the pierced steel planking “Hot” pad, we waited for our passengers. Our mission that day was to fly a Special Forces Colonel and his lieutenant to each of the remote firebases where we still had American troops or advisors. The colonel wanted to greet the soldiers, shake their hands, and have a Christmas meal with them. We would fly to six sites and be on the ground less than an hour at each. The colonel’s name was Kingston. He was already selected to be a Brigadier General. The lieutenant with him was going to become his aide de camp.

Soon two figures appeared wearing tiger stripe camouflage and red berets, the uniform worn by those advising or working with Vietnamese Rangers, the elite troops of the South Vietnamese Army. Both carried M-16 rifles. I thought that it was a little unusual for the colonel at least. *Maybe this mission isn’t going to be a milk run.*

The colonel went around the front of the helicopter crouched down under the whirling blades and climbed in the bench seat in front of Knight’s station. Our seats faced out while the bench faced forward. That put Knight’s right shoulder closest to the colonel’s back.

I looked at the trim handsome lieutenant coming around to my side and did a double take. It was West Point classmate Bobby Brand! We had been in the same class at Fort Sill two years earlier learning to be artillery officers. I had no idea he was in Vietnam let alone advising the Rangers and designated to be a general’s aide.

The pilots called out the checklist items prior to takeoff on the intercom. “RPM 6600, instruments in the green, secure up front, ready in the back?”

I’d been so surprised to see Brand that I didn’t think about the dark visor covering my face or the plain field jacket masking my flight suit and rank. I leaned over the seat to verify that he’d fastened his seat belt and saw that he hadn’t. I pressed the button on my intercom to report we weren’t ready yet. I reached over the seat and tapped Brand’s shoulder, perhaps a little harder than necessary. He turned around with a snarl on his face as I shouted for him to fasten his seat belt.

It is very noisy in Huey, especially with the doors open. It was also very warm. Brand gripped his rifle a little harder but didn’t seem interested in following my instructions. I’d heard about the macho infantry refusing to use the seat belts and about crew chiefs having to raise Cain to get them fastened. I swatted Bobby’s shoulder again even harder than the first time. By then I realized that he thought I was only a private or at best a sergeant. This time he turned around and gave me a withering look that might have been translated “I eat snakes for breakfast buddy. Don’t mess with me.”

This time I shouted even louder for him to fasten his seat belt and smiled to myself when he complied angrily. I announced that we were clear up on the right and the pilots



took off toward our first destination, a firebase called *Dak To*. Famous for changing hands several times between the Americans and the North Vietnamese Main Force.

Once airborne I twisted sideways and slapped Brand's shoulder again knowing that by now, he'd be good and riled up and ready to bayonet the disrespectful punk right door gunner. As he turned to face me with a look that could kill, I raised the visor on my helmet and shouted, "Merry Christmas Bobby!"

It was a darn good thing he had that seat belt on, or he might have tumbled out the open side door in his agitated state of anger and confusion followed by recognition and a slow recovery of his strained composure. Eventually we shook hands awkwardly because of the positioning of the seats. I lowered my visor and loaded the machine gun hoping I wouldn't have any need for it that day.

As we neared *Dak To*, there was evidence everywhere of recent and not so recent fighting. It was almost surreal to see the thousands of shell holes everywhere dating back to the Indochina war of the early fifties. The more recent ones stood out starkly in the green jungles and mountainsides.

During our landing there, the ammunition dump was on fire with explosions sending debris everywhere. We did our approach from 5,000 feet in a very tight spiral to stay over friendly territory (standard procedure at that time).

After the mission, Bobby and I got to trade stories and agreed to get together later. Some months later, I became newly promoted Brigadier General Kingston's pilot for a couple of weeks. However, I passed up a chance to serve the general on his next assignment in Thailand searching for POWs and MIAs. Bobby stayed with him.

Ironically, four years later, Captain Brand and I found ourselves in the same Field Artillery Officers Advanced Course at Fort Sill.

## **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1** Our company officers recognized the hard work our enlisted crewmembers did every day, often laboring for hours after our missions, having flown with us the whole time. Giving the enlisted men a day off by filling all their seats with officers, sent a clear message of appreciation and caring for their welfare.

**LL #2** Colonel (Promotable) Kingston also set an example in taking the time to visit his outlying detachments while combat was ongoing. Kingston — clearly a soldier's general, would go on to four stars.

**LL #3** Previously, I made it a habit to stay after landing to help the crew chief and gunners close out the maintenance. For them, it meant a lot seeing a lieutenant get his hands dirty and put in the extra time rather than just focusing on himself by going for a drink. That act helped solidify that when we flew together we were one team.

**LL #4** Do not to judge a book by its cover. I can't blame Bobby for not recognizing me, but what a charge I got revealing myself to him!

**LL #5** The other pertinent lesson lies in the bond we share as classmates, across decades. Grip hands though it be from the shadows.

## **Category: South Korea 1971 - 1984**

### **South Korean Intrigue (1978 & 1980)**

#### **John & Linda Bryant C-1 29261**

On my first tour, I was a young bachelor Lieutenant who served with troops in the field, frequently on the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between South and North Korea. After returning stateside, I attended graduate school for Latin American Studies, fully expecting to go from college to an assignment in the Southern Command in Panama. That was what I was told.

However, the U.S. and Panama governments negotiated the turnover of the Panama Canal while I was in college. Perhaps that was why the job I was slated to fill "disappeared" several months before I graduated.

That's when my assignment officer in D.C. informed me that I wouldn't go to Panama. So, he asked, "What do you want to do?" I told him I'd like to continue the Foreign Area Officer training program by spending time in Brazil. A few weeks later, he

asked if I wanted a job in the U.S. Embassy in Brazil. I said “yes.” He replied he would query the Embassy whether they would accept me.

Unfortunately, a few weeks later, he told me the Embassy wanted a more senior officer. Back to the drawing board. “What sort of field artillery assignment do you want?” Somehow, we agreed I would take a staff field artillery assignment in Korea during my second tour to the “Land of the Morning Calm.”

Some good came from the reassignment. My new wife, Linda, knew she could convince the assignment people within the Army Nurse Corps to assign her to the Republic of Korea (ROK). They did. She was transferred to the 121st Evacuation Hospital in Seoul, Yongsan Garrison, where I would work. So, Linda and I would live in Seoul with its eight million people.

I finished my classes in May 1978, and we placed our wonderful house on the market. We sold Linda’s Chevette to a dealership in Tucson and headed east in our Datsun 710 for final visits with my parents in Alabama and Linda’s mother in Columbus.

When we arrived in South Korea in June 1978, we learned we wouldn’t receive on-post quarters. Instead, we moved into a tiny apartment in a Korean high-rise complex beside the Han River. It was a ten-minute walk for Linda after passing through Yongsan Garrison’s back gate to the Hospital. In parallel, I got a bicycle, and it was about a ten-minute ride to cross from South Post to North Post, where my office was.

We had shipped our car to Pusan and had to travel by train one day to the far southern tip of the Korean peninsula to pick it up. Unfortunately, the storage office was closed when we arrived, and they wouldn’t release our car. The person I spoke to said they had a unit “function” and had advertised on AFNK radio and television that the office would be closed. However, we hadn’t heard or seen that news alert.

I was upset because we both had to return to Seoul and couldn’t stay overnight. But I kept my cool, and we persuaded the duty person to process our car’s paperwork and allow us to pump some gas so we could drive back to Seoul.

South Korea is about the size of Indiana. We got on the “Main Supply Route” (MSR), which resembles an American interstate, and drove to Seoul, my first time driving in ROK! The MSRs were constructed so sections along the highway could be used as wartime emergency airstrips. They’re flat and straight and have adjacent ramp space—good planning in a country that was invaded once and has been vulnerable to attack for its entire existence.

### **Learning to Juggle**

My orders posted me to the senior military headquarters in Seoul, composed of the U.N. Command (UNC), U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), and the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA).

This second tour in Korea was quite different. I was assigned to the Operations Division in the headquarters, which combined “everything.” A few months after I arrived, South Korea and America created the ROK/U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC). Its mission was to exercise wartime operational command over all American and ROK forces. The senior American officer in-country was a U.S. Army General who commanded all those headquarters with a single staff performing all the functions.

Wearing all those “hats” was confusing sometimes. We often found ourselves as staff officers of higher headquarters, tasking ourselves in the subordinate headquarters. For example, when representing the U.S. Forces Korea Headquarters, we might task ourselves for input as the Eighth U.S. Army staff! There was also a U.S. Air Force Korea headquarters at Osan AB and a U.S. Navy Korea headquarters in Chinhae.

So, we staffers were involved with everything. In that environment, we experienced a lot of national-level political intrigue, making an assignment that was for the history books.

I was the only Captain in an office filled with multiservice Majors and Lieutenant Colonels controlled by a U.S. Army LTC branch chief. Most of them were on a one-year “short tour,” so I had a chance to work with many talented guys in my two years.

I particularly enjoyed my first experience working with Marines since the Field Artillery Advance Course. Colonel Bob Burhans, USMC, was my boss for the last year of my tour. He was a tall, lean native Nebraskan in his mid-fifties with a crew cut and craggy face that one would expect of a very senior Marine Colonel. The Colonel was a remarkable man whom I respected immensely. He told us his first job in the Marine Corps was as a member of the White House color guard for President FDR! He was commissioned after WW II and served as a young infantry officer in the Korean War. He had also been an observer with British forces fighting communist guerrillas in Malaysia in the early 1960s and fought again in Vietnam. He said he was technically a “noncombatant” in Malaysia, but that didn’t matter when he was on small patrols in the jungle. When the bullets started flying, he was just one of the guys firing back! I could see the younger Marines paid him the highest respect. As the junior officer, I was usually the one tapped for the necessary but “dirty” little jobs no one wanted.

### **VIP Visitors**

I learned that Congressman Bill Nichols from my district in Alabama was scheduled to visit USFK in 1978 as a member of the House Armed Services Committee delegation. Mr. Nichols would later propose the landmark legislation, titled the Goldwater-Nichols Act, with Senator Barry Goldwater. In 1986, it fundamentally transformed the Department of Defense's relationships. Nichols was a Democrat from Sylacauga - the town closest to

my hometown and our biggest rival in many fields. His military experience included being a World War II infantry officer who had lost a leg. He had played football at Auburn before the war and was a member of the Auburn Board of Regents while in Congress. He was not in Congress when I pursued a USMA appointment, but he defeated the Republican Glenn Andrews, who did give me my nomination.

Additionally, I had escorted Congressman Nichols in early 1970 when he visited West Point as a member of the Academy's Board of Visitors. He accompanied me to our lunch, where I was the "table commandant." He enjoyed talking to us at a time when the Vietnam War tore the nation apart.

I also learned the USFK Protocol Office needed escort officers for the congress members' visit. So, I cleared with my boss to volunteer in the hope I could "visit with" Mr. Nichols. Happily, I was chosen and received a briefing from the Protocol office about the "care and feeding" of congressmen. Now, I was ready.

Unfortunately, Alabama football reared its head and affected my plans and those of Mr. Nichols. The delegation visited U.S. forces in Japan before going to the ROK when a football recruiting scandal erupted at Auburn. Mr. Nichols decided that, as a member of the university's Board of Regents, he had to return to Alabama. Thus, no trip to ROK for him. Of course, there was no backing out for me, but despite the absence of Mr. Nichols, I anticipated the opportunity as a young Captain to see elected officials in action.

One of the congressmen was Representative Barry Goldwater, Jr., of California, the Senator's son. He was a spitting image, with curly brown hair and that high Goldwater forehead. It was clear he had the same conservative political philosophy. The man was about 40 at the time, and, for some reason, I recall he was recently divorced.

I also remember the son for two other reasons. The first occurred during a visit to the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone. Panmunjom was, and I'm sure it still is a very tense place. Two American officers, one a West Pointer from the Class of 1966, had been brutally murdered there. Plus, other American soldiers and civilian Korean workers were wounded by the North Koreans only two years before the infamous tree-cutting incident.

However, new rules had been implemented to reduce the chance of soldiers from the opposing sides coming into dangerous contact.

Our escorts took us into the main building where the meetings were held between the United Nations Command and North Korean and Chinese representatives. North Koreans are not allowed in the building while the UNC is escorting visitors and vice versa. However, they can observe through the windows of the Quonset-type building.

Commonly, they do this to confirm that the rules that apply to the building are not violated. For example, the table where the meetings are conducted has microphones, and each side's flags are permanently emplaced. Because the flags are major symbols neither side wants its national flags defiled by the other side. Each side observes the security of their flags when the other side has visitors in the building. I certainly cannot imagine a UNC visitor defiling the North Korean or Chinese flag in any way. However, knowing the insane hatred the North Koreans hold for Americans, it is not too great a leap to believe they might defile our flag and that of the U.N.



N Korean Joint Security Area Guards at Panmunjom  
photo courtesy of pinterest.com

That apprehension grew out of my first tour when the North Korean DMZ soldiers used to call out to us in bad English: “Tonight you die, GI.” To me, no one was more mysterious and nastier than the North Korean soldiers in the DMZ.

I stood behind the delegation while the members were briefed. I noticed two North Korean soldiers approach and stop at a window to watch from outside. Mr. Goldwater stood near me, so I tapped him on the arm and pointed out the two soldiers.

I was surprised and slightly concerned when he walked to the window and began to stare very intently, almost ferociously, at the soldiers on the outside. They watched him approach and returned his stare. As the glaring continued, I hoped nothing more would happen. The stare-off lasted about a minute, but it seemed much longer.

But the Congressman out-stared the two soldiers, who turned and walked away. Mr. Goldwater returned to my side with a triumphant grin on his face! After the silent dust up, I did everything I could to expedite the delegation's departure from the Joint Security Area and the DMZ back to the safety of Seoul.

The second reason I remember Mr. Goldwater years later, was his desire for a custom-made leather jacket. On the bus ride to the DMZ, he asked me several times about shopping for leather coats in Itaewon, a major shopping area near the main military garrison in Seoul. "Do you know any good tailors? Can they be made in a couple of days? How much would a good one cost?"

My best answers did not discourage him. So, as we reached Seoul and the Itaewon shopping complex, only a few hundred yards from Yongsan, he asked to be let off the bus. It is hard for a Captain to say no to a Congressman. So, I had the bus stop and was pointed in the right direction.

However, I clearly instructed Mr. Goldwater that he had to be ready to go at 1700 (5 p.m.) that night for a social occasion. He checked his watch and promised me he would be prepared. Later, he was on time. So, giving the Congressman some freedom worked out okay.

Only one wife accompanied the tour of the DMZ and the North Korean tunnel. She was the much younger wife of an older Congressman. She was a blonde "looker" who got quite a few glances from the young soldiers providing security around the various places we visited. I recalled her husband dozing off a few times during the briefings.

After returning the delegation to the hotel in Seoul, I was waiting for my return transportation when a large Cadillac limousine arrived at the entrance, displaying American Embassy plates and flags. The driver hopped out to open the doors, and several well-dressed American women climbed out. Each one carried an armload of wrapped purchases in Itaewon. The driver rushed to the car's trunk, unlocked it, and practically jumped back to avoid the hatch, which exploded upward from the interior pressure!

The trunk was filled to its top with more wrapped packages. The ladies moved to the back of the car to supervise the unloading and correct placement on the bellhops' luggage carts, which rapidly appeared.

Although Mr. Nichols did not make the trip to the ROK, his wife did. Among the ladies leaving the car, I recognized Mrs. Nichols by her big, bouffant hairdo.

So, when the chaos subsided, I introduced myself as one of the delegation's escorts and one of her husband's constituents. With a very southern accent, she immediately introduced me to the other women as one of her constituents. She asked me if I wanted to go to the delegation's hospitality room?

Not one to miss an opportunity to learn how congress members traveled, I readily agreed. She escorted me to one of the upstairs hotel suites, filled with congressmen, spouses, and Embassy personnel. There was an open bar with snacks in one corner of the suite, and one wall was stacked to the top with packages carefully tagged with individuals' names. It seemed like overkill, but I had heard before about Congressional junkets.

Mrs. Nichols introduced me to a few other delegation members and their spouses and offered me something from the bar. I declined, telling her I had to return to Yongsan Garrison.

**Lesson Learned:** It was a good day observing congressmen “putting their pants on one leg at a time.” Just like the rest of us mere mortals. That was a good lesson for an Army Captain.

### **Economic Situation**

(Note: Korean family names are first in order left to right)

Our final seven months overseas were remarkable because of a situation and three incidents involving the leader of South Korea and our military forces.

President Park Chung Hee was an Army officer who seized control “extra constitutionally” in the early 1960s. During 18 years, he did not rule as a “Jeffersonian democrat.” Instead, his authoritarian centralization permitted the country to quickly move forward economically through import substitution and focusing on industrialization.

For example, South Korean corporations made excellent products under brand names such as Gold Star and Hyundai, which were unavailable in the Korean market. Instead, they were exported to generate foreign exchange to permit further growth. Essential consumer items were not allowed either.

In parallel, many Koreans knew the consumer items they greatly desired were available to military personnel in the base commissaries. Soon, a thriving black market began in which American soldiers were willing participants, with eager South Koreans who would pay more than commissary prices.

Linda and I witnessed the result of such bartering during a people-to-people exchange program in which American families visited Koreans in their homes. There, Americans could appreciate how our hosts lived and could build bonds between us. When Linda and I visited one family's home for dinner, they had a small color T.V. set turned on beside the dining table. Plus, a large bottle of mayonnaise and Tang, a powdered orange drink, sat in the center of the table. I'm sure those products, generally not available to Koreans and quite a status symbol, were acquired illegally.



There was an extensive U.S. effort to prevent Americans from buying and reselling items to Koreans. For example, the *Stars and Stripes* military newspaper frequently had articles detailing how a soldier and Korean citizens were busted for black marketeering. But I don't think the effort was very successful. Linda and I remember a soldier leaving the Post Exchange with a cart containing cases of "honey almond" facial cream. We didn't think he was going to use it personally. Undoubtedly, it was going to his girlfriend for her use or for her to get it into the black market.

### **The October 26th Incident**

The following recollection is based upon my memory of reading the English version of the Korean *Herald* newspaper several days after the incident. It began on Friday night, 26 October 1979, when the 121st Evacuation Hospital was having an Oktoberfest party at the Yongsan Officers Club that Linda and I attended. We were not aware anything was amiss until the next morning when I woke to learn from AFKN radio, "The President had been injured in an accident," martial law had been declared, and Americans should remain at home except for emergencies.

The great fear, of course, was that the Communist North Koreans might choose this time of uncertainty to launch an attack across the DMZ. They knew time was running out for them as the ROK became progressively stronger economically and, by extension, militarily. As the world now knows clearly, their system was deteriorating. Perhaps now was the time to attack?

Without being sure what the President's "injury" and martial law meant I knew our security situation had changed significantly. Evacuation from our apartment was not an unrealistic expectation. I woke Linda to tell her about the unsettling events. I'll never forget her immediate response. I've kidded her about it since because, in a nutshell, it epitomized where women place their priorities. At a time when I was worried about a North Korean attack that could quickly overwhelm friendly forces, her first response was, "Does this mean I can't go to Itaewon?" My mouth dropped open when I heard that question!

Recovering and waiting for the telephone call that could send us fleeing from our home, I quickly scribbled down the larger items we might leave behind so I could contact our insurance company, USAA, if necessary.

Several days later, we learned what happened. President Park's regime was authoritarian in denying social, political, and economic rights that Americans take for granted. However, by late 1979, he communicated that he was ready to loosen the restraints on his people despite North Korea remaining a lethal threat. His new plans were not accepted by the powerful who economically benefited from the current system, nor

were they accepted by those who feared the government could not afford to loosen its security-conscious restrictions.

On the evening of 26 October 1979, President Park had dinner in the Korean Central Intelligence Agency's safe house within the Presidential compound, known as the Blue House. President Park's Korean Military Academy classmate, the head of the KCIA, attended. The KCIA chief was also one of those who opposed President Park's readiness to loosen up. Also at this private dinner was a civilian aide to the President and two young Korean women, a singer, and an accompanying musician.

Each man's normal security contingents guarded the President and KCIA chief. At the safe house, those security personnel remained together in the kitchen.

Meanwhile, in the dining room, the KCIA chief tried to persuade the President to cancel his plans. At one point, he excused himself from the dinner and went to the kitchen, where he gave his security guards a secret code word before returning to the table. After a very short time, he pulled a pistol and opened fire, killing the President and wounding the civilian aide.

The code word he gave his security detail alerted them to stand by for gunshots. When they heard his shots, they immediately opened fire on the President's guards, killing all of them. The KCIA chief went to the kitchen to confirm the President's guards were dead. Then, he returned to the dining room. The young women were terrified but had managed to drag the wounded civilian aide into another room. There, the chief found the aide and killed him with more shots.

Thankfully, I did not know what happened to the young women because if they had been killed, I would have had trouble ever trusting a South Korean again. Imagine the horrible scene in the kitchen as eating, smoking, and joking went on before men opened fire on other men whom they surely knew and with whom they had worked with many times. It was like a scene from a Hollywood gangster movie. Unfortunately, the killing was not a fictional movie. It was real life and death.

The KCIA chief was not finished. He and his entourage entered their cars and sped to the Korean Ministry of Defense across the street from the U.S. Army's Yongsan Garrison. There, they rushed in and announced the President had been shot by "persons unknown." The KCIA chief added he was there to establish control and continuity in this fragile, vulnerable time.

However, the charade only lasted a day. Early on 27 October, other government officials uncovered the truth. Shortly after 1230 hours, the KCIA chief and his aides were arrested by loyalists, including the Army, of the constituted government.

Subsequently, the civilian Vice President was sworn in as President, and the KCIA chief went to trial and was convicted of murder and treason. He and his cronies were executed because justice in the ROK is harsh and quick.

What did the Americans do? Our forces at every level were not placed on heightened alert because senior American military and political leaders were not informed that the ROK President was murdered. I know my headquarters' alert status was not raised initially.

It was chaotic for several days as we tried to determine if the North Koreans were doing anything unusual and whether the ROK government was stable. The civilian Vice President had no power base in a country ruled so long by the military. Plus, a substantial element in the country opposed liberalization, which seemed more likely with a civilian President. The prospects of civilian rule were slim. I did not realize how discouraging they were.

A personal aspect of this incident is that President Park's wife had been killed years before in an assassination attempt on his life. Now, he joined her by paying the ultimate price for political leadership.

### **December 12th Incident**

Roughly two months later, the political and military situation was as normal as one might expect in a country in which a high government official had assassinated the head of state. However, there was more chaos about to erupt.

On a Wednesday night in mid-December, Linda and I accompanied our neighbors and good friends Jo and Jim Hutcherson to the Hospital's Christmas party, again at the Officers Club. "Hutch," the comptroller of the 121st Hospital, with Jo had a baby a few months before, so they had a babysitter that night. As we returned from the party, Linda and I knew Hutch was driving the babysitter back to her home built on the south side of the Han River in a U.S. government housing complex.

Linda and I were in bed for about an hour when we heard a knock on our door. Jo was in the hallway and explained that she was worried because Hutch had not returned. The babysitter's family told her on the phone that Hutch had dropped off their daughter and left for Yongsan and that he should have been home already. We suggested it was too early to be concerned and to give it a little more time, and if he hadn't returned or called, we could contact the Provost Marshal.

A few minutes later, our phone rang, and it was Hutch. He said he had tried to call Jo several times but couldn't get through, so he called us. More importantly, he detailed how he had tried to return North over the bridge spanning the wide river he had crossed minutes earlier. Surprisingly, ROK Army tanks blocked it. He also tried two other bridges

to get back to the north side, but they, too, were blocked. Not knowing why, he decided to stay overnight at the babysitter's home.

Of course, we took this information to Jo, and the three of us agreed something was up, but there was little we could do about it then. The following day, Hutch was able to return home, and we learned conservative forces had led a coup in and around the capital.

Major General Chun Doo-hwan was the senior figure in the December 12th, 1979 coup. He commanded the Capital Defense Command and immediately established himself as President.

That same morning, one of my USMA classmates, Fred Lough, an Army physician, shared with us what he experienced the previous night. His quarters nestled in the corner of Yongsan's South Post, directly on the other side of a ten-foot wall from the ROK Ministry of Defense (MOD). He told us he was making a late-night call to his assignment officer in northern Virginia when suddenly, a protracted exchange of automatic weapons fire erupted on the MOD side of the wall.

He crouched low and told his assignment officer he heard a firefight. The gunfire continued intermittently for a few minutes. Then, he heard the sound of a tracked vehicle quickly approaching. Its arrival and engagement with its rapid-fire .50 caliber weapon promptly ended the fight, signaled by quiet, returning inside the MOD compound.

The coup was successful, and the conservative military was back in power. I learned later that the casualties involved a few young enlisted men on both sides. Perhaps some died at the hands of their countrymen doing what their commanders ordered. It was a tragedy.

The minutes immediately following the MOD's seizure were hazardous. Many Koreans who were still loyal to the liberal regime escaped from the MOD. Quickly, they raced a few hundred feet across the street onto the U.S. Yongsan Garrison. There, they entered the American command center and used its communication assets to rally other loyal forces. I recall a small U.S. Army Military Police force secured the command center.

Luckily, the loyal Korean soldiers decided to surrender rather than fight the coup forces. Had those conducting the coup forced their way onto Yongsan, imagine American soldiers killed or wounded while doing their duty to secure the compound and the command center? That would have caused tremendous long-term damage to the relationship between the two countries.

It was a tense time, as my South Korean colleagues were very edgy with each other, carefully keeping secret their personal allegiances until they could assess where others' allegiances lay. I would ask them what was going on, and they would be noncommittal and guarded, particularly if in the presence of their countrymen. Gradually, however, things

returned to normal as it became clear the new regime had gained enough support to stay in power.

### **Kwangju Incident**

The final major event in our stay in the ROK began a few months later, in the Spring of 1980. Kwangju is in the southwestern part of Korea, an area that the central government has historically ignored. Consequently, it missed out on much of the country's economic growth. There have been improvements in the recent past. However, those living in Kwangju believed that the conservative government that had come to power in the December 1979 coup, would return to the bad old days.

Widespread demonstrations began in the Spring and quickly turned violent when the government reacted forcefully. Since the nation maintains a substantial mobilization capability, everyone serves some time in the armed forces. So, the youth in the region were militarily skilled. They broke into government armories. Armed with weapons, they opposed the government's police. Subsequent fighting quickly became very bloody. The Seoul government deployed more units to restore order.

Some news media images from the region showed very ruthless government operations. Students claimed the Army conducted summary executions of captured students. The number of dead indeed grew into the hundreds, while civil rights groups argued the count was many more. At one point, the students indicated they would cease fighting if the government would withdraw the Army paratroopers who were being particularly ruthless.

The fighting created a situation similar to that in the previous winter when the President's death potentially opened a "window of opportunity" for North Korean aggression. In this case, the North Koreans had to wonder if the dissatisfaction in the southwest was indicative of more widespread discontent, which they might exploit. Adding to that danger, many Korean units ordered to go to the southwest were pulled from defensive positions north of Seoul.

Combined Forces Command reacted to the riots in the southwest and ROKA's repositioning response. The command declared higher readiness and 24-hour full-staff operations. Colonel Burhans directed me to augment the CFC command center's operations indefinitely. During this incident, General John Wickham was Commander in Chief CFC/UNC/USFK and Commanding General of the Eighth Army. The U.S., and he in particular, was criticized immediately following the riots by those who opposed the U.S. for being "behind" the government's brutal suppression of the riots.

I saw enough in the command center to know those charges were absurd. In fact, we learned ROKA's re-deployment plans only well after they were in effect. For example, we

closely monitored North Korean activities during the incident and the readiness of our forces on the DMZ. On several occasions, I answered the direct secure telephone line from ROKA headquarters to learn that a specific ROKA unit had been pulled from its defensive position on the DMZ for deployment to Kwangju.

My colleagues rushed to the map to identify which unit was enroute out of the DMZ. They reacted with great concern when they realized it was one of the divisions in the middle of the defense of the Uijongbu Corridor. The unexpected withdrawal created a defensive gap in the shortest invasion route for the North Koreans.

When ROKA movements weakened the DMZ defense, one of us would grab a phone and request that if ROKA had to deploy a division, it should be one in reserve rather than a division directly on the DMZ. The answer was usually something like, “As I said, the division is already moving.”

We concluded that the ROKA wasn’t choosing divisions based on their position on the DMZ. Instead, they chose them based on the reliability of their commanders. The headquarters was picking units whose commanders could be relied upon to go to Kwangju to kill South Koreans.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Sharing a border with a heavily armed, unpredictable neighbor requires a nation to maintain a strong deterrence, ready to react with little or no notice.

**LL #2:** A nation needs strong allies in a multipolar, contentious world.

**LL #3:** A nation may have to restrict its citizens’ political and financial rights for an extended period to set the stage for long and sustainable growth of the national economy.

**LL #4:** A nation should engage the intellect and industry of all its citizens, regardless of gender, religious preference, sexual orientation, or other factors historically used to hold people back.

**Courageous Harder Right**

**Gus Lee CL-70 Honorary Member L1968**

## (Originally, West Point Class of 1968)

In 1979, after serving as a Drill Sergeant, spending too many years in a doctoral program, and a year on the DMZ I was a captain assigned to 6th Brigade U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), Presidio, San Francisco. It was a significant departure from guarding the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) as part of the 2nd Infantry Division (2ID). Stateside there was no required physical training, reveille runs, attack alerts, maneuvering in frozen mountains, or troops to command. Reporting into my new assignment as a JAG Command Judge Advocate/Standards of Conduct officer, I recommended legal actions for recruiter fraud.

### Situation

Without the draft in the harsh prop-blast of a post-Vietnam, anti-military America, USAREC was far below enlistment quotas. Recruiters were evaluated and rated on how well they met their numerical “mission,” and were heavily pressured to do whatever it took to meet quotas. Many recruiters in the command actively processed unqualified “Category V” individuals who couldn’t meet mental and physical standards.

Integrity or corruption is always about leadership, or its absence. Instead of telling truth to authority -- *“The only way my command can meet unrealistic quotas is to cheat”* — general officers told Congress and the Department of the Army, “Yes, sir, can do.” Many then defaulted to allowing or abetting fraud to create the appearance of mission accomplishment. Some commanders encouraged recruiters to deliberately ignore regulations and commit UCMJ violations to include processing known drug dealers, ex-cons, foreign nationals, convicts, prisoners, and dead people while falsifying high school GED diplomas and the results of aptitude battery tests, and ignoring arrest records. Some recruiters even bribed enlistees and solicited paybacks.

Instead of requiring that USAREC not violate regulations or the UCMJ, the Commanding General, instructed the command’s JAG officers to deliver “tough ethics messages.”

Complying with those instructions led me to our brand-new O-6 (Promotable) Brigade Commander. He was a tough, taut combat veteran and West Point graduate. I advised him to relieve recruiters who had made fraudulent enlistments. Instead, the Colonel restored those men to duty and said he’d “get it right next time.”

On that path, he quickly assembled the Brigade’s 11 Battalion Commanders, 11 Command Sergeant Majors, and headquarters staff in Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas. There, he would deliver “the tough ethics message for me.” He ordered me to stay behind.

Subsequently, a battalion commander phoned me from Vegas. He said, “The boss ordered us to use patriotism to guilt casino, car dealership, and business owners into giving our top producing recruiters cash, free rooms, cars, gift products, and to cover it up from ‘that damn new JAG.’ Then, the concerned battalion commander added, “Gus, I taped him. Do not tell him it was me.”

I replied that he had confidentiality and appointed him as an investigating officer to take statements and names. An E-7 then delivered the tape to me, played it, and signed a witness statement that the tape recorded what the boss had said to the command that morning.

I contacted the USAREC Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) Colonel Charles Murray, USMA 1962, at Fort Sheridan, and asked for his advice. It was short and to the point. “Get witness statements.”

I flew to Las Vegas. At the casino, I found our senior officers in aloha shirts and shorts, smoking, joking, drinking, and gambling. I asked the Command Sergeant Major to assemble them in the conference room. He sensed trouble and didn’t ask questions.

The CSM went to work and I went to the commander’s suite where I played the tape. My boss ripped it apart and burned it. “Who turned me in? Who made the tape?” Like a childhood bully bruiser, he growled in my face, “Give me his name, or I’ll fire your ass, end your career, and disbar you!”

I sensed he didn’t like me.

I declined his orders. “Sir, this is good news. You can ride the legal time machine backward by revoking this morning’s orders. Our people are in the conference room so you can un-ring the bell and make the orders go away. No harm, no foul, no IG’s with cuffs. Don’t, and it’s a terrible, horrible, no good, bad luck day. Sir, this is your good deal, Fall-out, Army beats Navy forever. This is the best legal advice you’ll ever get.”

“Who gave you the tape?”

“Sir, we’re in mission jeopardy by putting bad guys in boots. Your JAG in the box’s advice saves everyone’s butt and keeps you out of Leavenworth.”

“And if I don’t follow your advice?”

“Sir, in accordance with AR 600 dash 50, I will report the violations to higher headquarters.”

He shook his head. “I assure you, you won’t. Now, who turned me in?”

Seeing that the brigade commander was not taking my advice, I returned downstairs and began taking witness statements. As I did, the brigade commander relieved me and ordered me to leave the casino. Upon returning to the Presidio, the brigade commander fulfilled his threats and wrote me a career-ending officer efficiency report (OER). In



parallel, I notified the USAREC Inspector General (IG) of the facts and evidence gathered about the incident.

### **Resolution**

The crisis was resolved by changes in USAREC. The USAREC IG, Colonel Lawrence A. Bell, Citadel, '56, relieved my brigade commander, all four of our unit's staff colonels, and several battalion commanders.

Major General (2 stars) Maxwell R. "Mad Max" Thurman, North Carolina State University 1953, became USAREC commanding general (CG). Brigadier General Caleb Jack Archer, Ohio University 1955, author of AR 600-50, the Standards of Conduct (ethics) Reg, took over the 6th Brigade.

My brigade commander was removed from the regular Army, and transferred into the National Guard, from which he retired.

What happened next? USAREC appointed me Pacific Theater Team Leader for the U.S. Senate & Department of Justice's global Connelly Investigation of the recruitment debacle.

What did we uncover? North Korean soldiers who could barely speak English, bearing ridiculously false papers, who openly scorned Americans, had eagerly enlisted with the tacit approval of their recruiters' fast-climbing battalion and brigade commanders and the knowing ignorance of HQ staffs and military entrance processing station (MEPS) personnel.

Additionally, the North Korean military personnel only signed on the condition that their recruiters got them into intelligence, communication, and nuclear weapon specialties with assignments to the 2nd Infantry Division in the North-South Demilitarized Zone

Overseas, we arrested fraudulently enlisted North Korean enemy agents within 1,000 meters of our tactical nuclear weapons in the Republic of Korea. Those arrests removed enemies of America and South Korea from potentially causing an international incident at the DMZ or destruction of an armed launch missile, or a second all-out Korean War (it remains a combat zone) or incalculable loss of life.

Instead of mission security we came close to mission catastrophe. Despite ample ethics lectures, mark it up to the gross absence of practical leadership skill training to do the hardest right despite career pressure.

Stateside, we arrested the U.S. recruiters and other personnel who processed enemy agents into the Army. Our people knew the right thing but chose to conspire against it.

The damaging OER was removed from my personnel file. COL Murray, my rater, wrote a positive efficiency report and I received a second Meritorious Service Medal in two years.

## Family Impacts

The bad news was that our infant daughter Jessica was suffering from an inoperable heart condition. In December 1979, Jessica had her first heart attack. Diane and I tag-teamed taking care of our baby girl when I was on base, and when Diane was not working as a clinical nurse specialist at the University of California, Davis Medical Center, a level-1 trauma center.

But my 280 days of temporary duty, mostly in South Korea, stranded Diane with constant, full-time high-risk surgeries and post-op care for our daughter. We both came from dysfunctional families without relatives who could help or be trusted, and the Presidio was a small base without young families that could offer help. She was forced to quit her advanced practice position. Sleep-deprived, she desperately needed me to be available to help her and our little girl.

In 1980, I left the Army. Later that year, Jessica died.

Diane and I carried on after our daughters passing. For years thereafter, we led the American Heart Association's support group for parents of terminally ill children. I became a prosecutor and acting deputy attorney general, and full-time author. In time, I helped form a high-tech start-up company and hired Colonel Charlie Murray and Desert Storm Commander General H.N. Schwarzkopf.

### Lessons Learned

**LL #1:** General Schwarzkopf taught me the axiom, **“The truth is that you always know the right thing to do. The tough part is doing it.”** That tough part is deploying our moral courage.

**LL #2: Act courageously.** Consciously prepare yourself now to not later run away, freeze, or fight frantically out of fear. Courageously discern the highest moral action (**HMA**) which is the hardest right. Boldly do it despite fear, risks, pressure; and then courageously train (not lecture) others to do likewise.

**LL #3: Discernment and moral reasoning beat critical thinking,** which bypasses ethics and right-vs.-wrong. This is detailed in *The Courage Playbook*, our eighth book and

second by Wiley Publishing. To discern means to ethically analyze; to reason using principled, conscience-driven logic to identify the hardest right, despite fear, pressure, anxiety, risks, and short-term consequences.

**LL #4: Doing the highest moral action (The Hardest Right) beats the heck out of acting cowardly.** Courageous leadership triumphs over comfort-seeking, going along to get along, moral error, acting the fool, and regret.

**LL #5: Moral regret has long legs.** Flight, freezing, fraud, avoiding conflict, chicken-fighting, anger, excuses, blame, cover your ass deflection, cover-ups, gulping cans of kiss-ass — each plants perpetual, deep, stinking, oh-dark-thirty moral regrets into the soul.

For example, being weak in character, I tried to pass Juice II, Nuke Physics, Solids/Fluids/Thermodynamics without cracking a book. I only failed two. After 57 years, as a Miyagi Master of Moral Remorse, I know that I will always regret flunking out of the Academy.

**LL #6: Doing the hardest right can save lives and deliver national and international mission security.** My Connelly Investigation experience proved that.

As did LTG Matthew Ridgway, USMA 1917, when he took command of the shattered Eighth U.S. Army during its chaotic retreat in early-1951 during the Korean War. The harder right was to continue a phased withdrawal and prep for evacuation. However, what he discerned was beyond the thinking of other senior officers, including that of his 5-star boss General MacArthur. The highest moral action and *hardest right* for LTG Ridgway was to instantly replace ineffective senior leaders; demand that their replacements get out of the rear; inspire company grade leaders to care for their troops; actively patrol; fight effectively from prepared defensive positions; and then competently perform a combined-arms attack. He turned a rout into a classic example of doing the hardest moral and military right despite obstacles.

### **LL #7: Contentment comes from standing up for one's principals.**

After academically flunking out of USMA, I became a Drill Sergeant. During the USAREC incident, I saw that we all, regardless of rank, wear around our necks a bright, invisible, brass Drill Instructor whistle on an old OD lanyard. It is a constant reminder to do the hardest right. Despite being a recovering coward, I went on to blow that shiny whistle three more times, as a board member and twice as a corporate senior vice president. Yes, I felt the old jab of fear, then breathed deeply, and, per training said *no* to my cowardly cover my-ass instinct. I worked against my weaknesses to morally discern the highest moral action.

### **Conclusion**

I have never regretted doing the hardest right and standing up for principles, despite pain, suffering, being fired, losing friends, career advancement, compensation, and homes. Faith and courage are authentic. Tough in the short term, moral courage preserves Duty, Honor, Country, and Serve with Integrity. My beloved wife Diane stood by those principles, as did Colonels Murray and Bell. Admirably, our biological children, as courageous leaders, became accustomed to doing the hardest right as an Army officer and an overseas non-profit CEO. They became brave and resolute whistleblowers, without a single regret.

### **Christmas Cheer 1983**

#### **Bill Knowlton D-1 28773**

In early December 1983, after I'd been in Korea at Camp Casey, south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) for about six months, I was called to see the brigade commander. As a tank battalion S3 and Executive Officer (XO), getting such a call was unexpected. The commander told me I'd been selected as the escort officer for a USO (United Services Organizations) tour of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders (DCC) Asian Christmas tour. Our brigade commander had decided to give the assignment to one of the two single majors in the brigade. I won the coin toss.

About 12 cheerleaders would be coming on the tour, accompanied by Suzanne Mitchell (the Director of the DCC) and an Air Force major, who was a military escort officer with them for the entire trip, which also included a visit to the U.S. Navy fleet in the Indian Ocean. During the seven days of their visit to Korea, they would be based in Seoul, and most days, they would fly out to several different remote sites for an hour to an hour and a half visit and then do a big show with singing and dancing numbers at a large base in the evening. During the week, I would be staying with the DCC in the Seoul Garden Hotel, and my job would be to accompany them on all their visits, make sure all the transportation arrangements went as planned, keep them on schedule, and deal with any glitches or problems that might arise. Since this was December in Korea with cold weather and the potential for snow, one of my primary responsibilities would be to make the weather call each day and go to an alternate schedule if it turned out we couldn't fly.

I met the cheerleaders at the Seoul airport in my dress greens uniform. When they got off the plane and I introduced myself as their in-country escort officer, one of the cheerleaders came over, slipped her arm into mine, and said, "Well, what are we going to nickname you? I think you look like Dudley Do-Right." From then on, that's how I was known to all the cheerleaders.

As I got to know them better, I found they were not showgirl "airheads" but hard-working, warm, outgoing, and friendly women. All of them had to have a full-time job or be in school and did cheerleading as a volunteer activity. These 12 had to compete to make the "traveling squad" and were the best of the 35 cheerleaders hired each year. I also quickly established a good rapport with Suzanne Mitchell and gained her trust. The Air Force escort officer didn't do much but tag along during the week. Staying at the Seoul Garden Hotel was a real luxury compared to my Spartan room at Camp Casey. One of my most cherished mementos of the trip is a photo of me on Suzanne Mitchell's enormous bed surrounded by the cheerleaders.

Suzanne ran a tight ship, and we never had a problem with a cheerleader being late or unprepared for a visit or performance. They knew they were fortunate to be there and would not mess it up. Visits during the day were to remote locations like radar sites or small outposts—which I welcomed because USO tours often forget those locations. We'd fly into a site, and the cheerleaders would spend an hour or two talking to the troops, autographing pictures, getting their photos taken, and maybe even doing a dance number if they had time. Suzanne Mitchell counted on me to keep track of the time and pull the cheerleaders away from the troops, giving them the cover that they, reluctantly, were forced to leave. I was the most envied man in Korea!



Bill Knowlton Suffering Through His Escort Duty

The evening shows were well-choreographed, big productions, usually with hundreds or thousands of troops attending in a big auditorium, field house, or hangar. These shows highlighted the cheerleaders' considerable dancing and singing skills. We usually see only their dancing routines at Dallas Cowboys football games, but the cheerleaders selected for the overseas tours included some superb vocalists. The last song they usually did during big shows was Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA," which brought down the house with its patriotic message.

Once I got the hang of the rhythm of the shows, Suzanne Mitchell started having me run the audiotape with the music for the show, which kept me on my toes. The cheerleaders knew the routines so well that in one show when we lost audio for a few minutes (a technical glitch), they kept the routine going without missing a beat. We left Seoul by 7:00 am and sometimes didn't return to the hotel until 10:00 or 11:00 pm. I was amazed by the cheerleaders' ability to stay fresh and energized all day and to look as good at the end of the day or after an hour-long ride in a noisy helicopter as they did when we started each morning—they were real professionals.

### **Christmas at the DMZ**

Christmas Day was a special day hosted by the 2nd Infantry Division. It included a visit to the units up on the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea, flying nap of the earth on Huey helicopters. That allowed me to have a little fun. Along with South Korean units, we had one U.S. infantry battalion on the DMZ. That battalion's

Executive Officer (XO) was John Greenwalt, a West Point classmate. I figured he would meet the helicopter when we arrived at the DMZ. He was about 5'6", so I got the two tallest cheerleaders over 6' and told them to put on extra lipstick on the way up. Once we landed, I pointed him out and turned them loose. They ran up to him and smothered him with hugs and kisses. He turned bright red and had lipstick all over his face and head. I believe he auctioned off his perfume and lipstick-soaked handkerchief.

Later, he accused me of having something to do with this ambush. Shocked, I was that he would accuse me of such a deed.

The visit to the DMZ had its serious side because this is where our troops are right on the front lines with hostile North Korea. The DMZ is a kind of no man's land separating North and South Korea across the peninsula. In most places, it is heavily mined. Panmunjom, the part of the DMZ we visited, is where talks between North and South Korea and their allies occur, supervised by neutral observer nations. These talks are held in a building that straddles the border, with half of the building in South Korea and half in North Korea. The building has doors at each end, which can be locked from the inside. We were allowed to go into the building where, in the northern half of the building, we technically were in North Korea. It was chilling to walk around inside that building and see North Korean guards scowling in the windows and to know that only a locked door was between us and them. I'm sure it brought home to all the cheerleaders why we have U.S. troops in South Korea and how dangerous their mission is.

All too soon, the week was over, and I said a tearful goodbye to the cheerleaders. I'd gotten to know them well in just a week. I keep in touch with one of them, whose daughter later was a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader.

My tour of duty in Korea was supposed to end in July 1984. Still, just before I went off on my escort duty with the DCC, I was asked to extend my tour for an additional six months the following summer to break into a new battalion commander. When I expressed something less than enthusiasm for this opportunity, the brigade executive officer clarified that it was not in my best interests to refuse the offer. After my "Major Knowlton, apparently you didn't understand the question" moment, I got the message and extended through December 1984.

The upside to this extension was that due to the rapport I'd developed with Suzanne Mitchell, she made a by-name request to the Commander in Chief (CINC) of USFK to have me assigned again as their escort officer over Christmas 1984 just before I left Korea. Some cheerleaders were repeaters from the previous year, but some were first-timers. These remarkable women told me I was one of the best escort officers they'd ever had—Dudley Do-Right or not.

**Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** Be careful about stereotyping. My preconceived ideas about what the cheerleaders would be like were totally wrong.

**LL #2:** Approach every mission like it's the most critical mission you'll ever take on. Give it your best. Because of the high visibility of the DCC tour, any screw-ups would be very apparent. So, I made it my top priority to do whatever I could to help Suzanne Mitchell and the cheerleaders during their visit.

**LL #3:** Tours by organizations like the USO are tremendously important. For troops overseas, particularly those on unaccompanied tours (which described 95% of soldiers in the 2nd Infantry Division), Christmas is arguably the most challenging and depressing time of the year because it really hits home that they're away from their families. USO tours help bring "home" to deployed troops and let them know they're not forgotten, and their service and sacrifice are valued.

**LL #4:** Those participating in USO tours deserve much credit for volunteering to entertain the troops. Suzanne Mitchell and the cheerleaders did their Christmas tour every year, and the cheerleaders fought for the privilege of going on the tour. They volunteered to leave their families and friends over Christmas, putting the troops first. If asked why they would do this, they would invariably reply that meeting and supporting our deployed servicemembers was a privilege and honor.

**LL #5:** If you are ever ambushed by stunning cheerleaders with ruby-red lips, don't be embarrassed. Instead, walk back to the troops and confidently say, "Yup, I still have it."



**LL #6:** Sometimes, good deeds are rewarded!

### **Postscript**

John Greenwalt was an outstanding officer and good friend. I wish he had lived long enough to read and recall this memorable life experience while he helped guard the border between freedom and dictatorship.

### **Learn To Win**

#### **Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207**

There is a world of difference between planning to win, issuing field instructions to those who will carry out parts of that plan, having the skill in the air or on the ground to perform the movement and delivery tasks for your part of the plan, and developing a tight trusting team of men and women warriors. Let me explain some differences.

Join the Army. Go to enlisted basic training, Airborne School, West Point, the Ranger School, Armor Advanced Officer Course, and learn how to **win** skirmishes, battles, and/or wars. WRONG!

Was I taught by my commanders how to **plan and win** combat engagements at my level of responsibility when I was an airborne, straight-leg, and air cavalry ground-platoon leader, CSC Armor company commander, mechanized infantry battalion operations officer (S-3) and Assistant S-3 of a combined arms brigade, as well as Joint Space Command's first Space-Ground Operations Analyst? NEVER!

The closest **win training** that I received was conducted during the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) 1982-1983 academic year. During the ten-month program, we were often issued an order to seize or hold an objective, given an hour to figure out how to accomplish the mission, and then required to brief our plan and justify why it would work. But again, I along with my officer peers, were not taught the differences between a win plan and a field order.

Instead of win training, during my 25.5 years of service from 1965 through 1990, many 1970 classmates and other company grade officers were taught individual, unit operational, and fire-and-maneuver **skills** at the Division and below levels. For example, we were taught how to cross a line of departure on time ,at the right crossing point, and heading in the right direction. We were trained how to parachute onto an Artic drop zone

and survive 60-degree below zero temperatures, accurately deliver aerial, tank, mortar, artillery, and rifle fire, conduct an air cavalry reconnaissance mission, conduct a night attack on foot, swim a mechanized Infantry battalion (Bn) across the Imjin River; maintain the unit's vehicles and radios, along with many similar or supporting military skills.

So, what does a win plan look like? First, It is not a single course of action. Instead, it is the commander's preferred course of action with several contingency reactions if the enemy, terrain, or weather surprises you. Here is my list of contingency win-planning steps.

## 10-Step Contingency Win Plan

### #1 Understand the Mission Objective & Timeline

#### #2 Know The Enemy

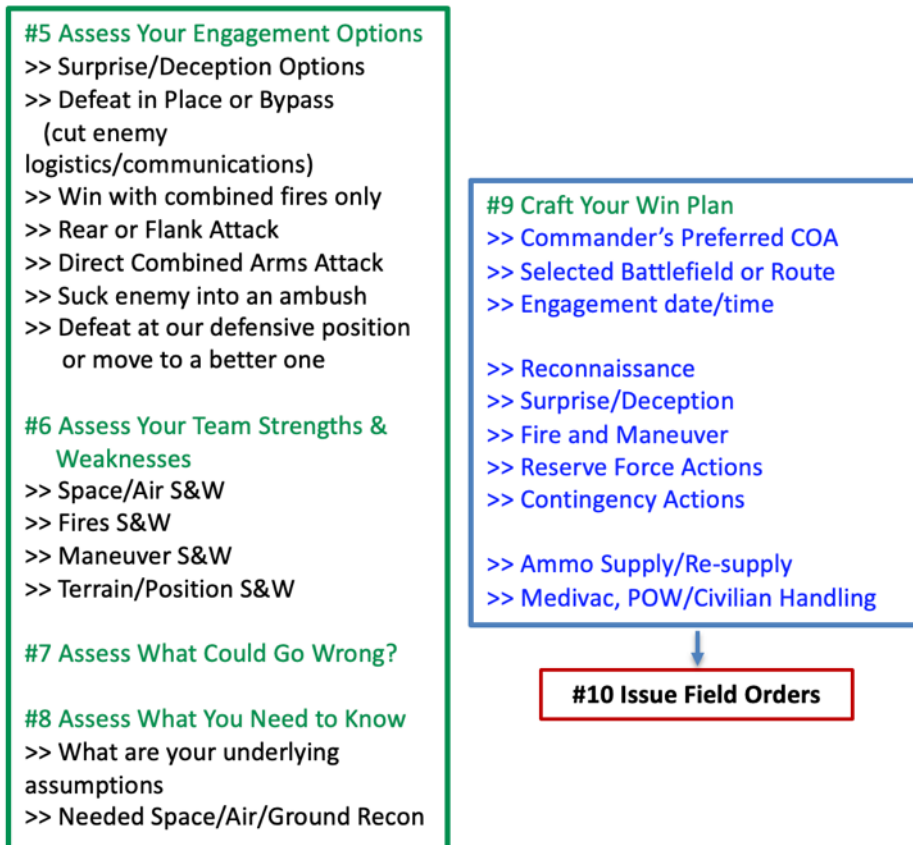
- >> How the enemy fights
- >> Their Strengths & Weaknesses
- >> 3 possible enemy Courses of Action and consequences

#### #3 Know the Battlefield

- >> Where do you want to fight
- >> Exposed maneuver areas/routes
- >> Concealed maneuver areas/routes
- >> Maneuver obstacles
- >> Fastest/slowest passage areas

#### #4 Know the Weather

- >> Forecasted weather
- >> Amount of daylight/night
- >> impact on movement
- >> impact on visibility



Now, compare the contingency win plan to the 5-paragraph field order below. Notice the two are significantly different. Contingency win planning causes you to figure out: How am I going to win this engagement and what are my contingencies? Thus, it increases the probability of unit success and must be answered **before** issuing subordinate-unit field orders.

## 5 Paragraph SMEAC Field Order

### Situation

- >> Enemy Situation
- >> Friendly Situation

### Mission

- >> Friendly Mission (goal)
- >> Friendly team composition
- >> Where/When do we execute

### Execution

- >> Commander's Intent
- >> Scheme of air/fires/maneuver
- >> Success condition

### Administration/Logistics

- >> Close Air Support
- >> Fire Support
- >> Maneuver Support
- >> Ammo Supply/Re-supply
- >> Medivac, POW handling

### Combined Arms Command & Control/Signal

- >> Network/Radio settings
- >> Special signals (smoke, flares, etc)
- >> Code words

Sometimes, you'll have plenty of time to answer or figure out every subordinate planning step. Other times, you have to do it on the fly after receiving an emergency mission. For example, you might cut the entire plan in half, do that analysis, and then issue the field orders.

## Example Quick Contingency Win Planning

### #1 Understand the Mission Objective & Timeline

#### #2 Know The Enemy

- >> How the enemy fights
- >> Their Strengths & Weaknesses
- >> 3 possible enemy Courses of Action and consequences
  
- >> Where do you want to fight
- >> Forecasted weather

#### #8 Assess What You Need to Know

- >> What are your underlying assumptions
- >> Needed Space/Air/Ground Recon

#### #9 Craft Your Win Plan

- >> Commander's Preferred COA
- >> Selected Battlefield or Route
- >> Engagement date/time
  
- >> Reconnaissance / Deception
- >> Fire and Maneuver
- >> Reserve Force Actions
- >> Contingency Actions



### #10 Issue Field Orders

Also, here are some situations that should trigger a commander to perform contingency win plan analysis, select an engagement option, craft the win plan, and then issue orders to execute:

#1 Your corps is ordered to prepare to attack and remove Iraq forces from Kuwait.

#2 Your division is ordered to breach Iraqi defense lines, allowing follow-on divisions to flow north through the gap.

#3 Your aviation brigade is ordered to make a deep attack into enemy territory and destroy all Iraqi Republican Guard units.

#4 Your battalion is ordered to parachute into Panama and seize a vital airfield.

#5 Your cyber defense company is ordered to locate and counter ongoing cyber sabotage against specified U.S. military command and control software.

#6 Your infantry platoon is ordered to immediately deploy to a special weapons base that has nuclear weapons and prevent enemy commandos from penetrating into the special weapons compound.

But, is my claim about a lack of win-plan training just my inattention or slowness to grasp the training I received at the Academy and in later schools? Or is my concern valid? Below, you will read where much higher-ranking officers than me recognized serious weaknesses in the Army's military training system and set out to improve it beginning in the 1970s and stretching into the 1990s.

### **The Depuy-Gorman Skill Training Revolution**

In 1973, General Depuy, a highly decorated combat veteran of three wars, became the first commander of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_E.\\_DePuy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_E._DePuy)

As recorded in the Army historical report, *A Training Revolution*, "... when Depuy and his Deputy Chief of Staff for Training, Major General Paul F. Gorman, came to TRADOC, soldiers and officers were being trained according to the Army Training Program (ATP), which had been in use since World War I. The ATP was a time-oriented process that prescribed how many hours would be devoted to each subject and task. As Depuy noted about the ATP, "Never mind whether or not the troops learned anything." The ATP was based on the availability of conscripts, assuming that the United States, with its ocean barriers, would have sufficient time to raise, equip, and train a combat force, if necessary. After January 1973, the U.S. military services no longer could depend on the draft to meet their manpower needs. Other factors TRADOC had to consider in building a new training system was the post-Vietnam downsizing of the Army and shrinking

defense budgets of the 1970s. The Army not only needed better training, it also needed efficient and cost-effective training.”

“. . . The philosophy Depuy and Gorman brought to TRADOC was influenced by revelations during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War of the lethality and range of modern weapons and the tremendous importance of well-trained crews and tactical commanders. Gorman and Depuy agreed that what the Army needed was a ‘train-evaluate-train’ program that would require soldiers to perform to established standards” while fighting outnumbered.

“. . . Depuy and Gorman introduced the Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP), where battalion and below units practiced fighting against opposing forces (OPFOR) . . .” to increase training realism that allowed evaluating unit performance and identifying skills needing improvement. Depuy and Gorman knew such training was needed to prepare combat and combat support units to be able to be rushed into combat and . . . win the first battle.”

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA075663.pdf>

Battalions had a list of day and night field mission tasks to accomplish their mission such as infantry, armor, artillery, air cavalry, or air defense units. Evaluators and electronic devices scored the skill of the unit to see if the unit met or surpassed the performance criteria. For example, MILES equipment mounted on rifles and machine guns allowed laser shooting between friendly and opposing forces, automatically counting the effectiveness of friendly or OPFOR firing. During the 90s, indoor simulator training was added.

Yes, Depuy and Gorman’s ARTEP-OPFOR revolution hugely improved battalion-and-below mission skills. However, it did not require performance evaluation of commander and staff win planning.

### **The OECS Experiment**

The Army's need to improve line and support unit performance in the late 1960s led to establishing the Organizational Effectiveness Center and School. The doors opened in 1975 in parallel with the Depuy-Gorman training revolution. The goal was to train military men and women as management consultants, have them consult in units, measure performance benefits, and determine if the consulting improved leadership effectiveness that generated higher unit performance or output.

I was part of the (OECS) experiment. In January 1980, I arrived at the Center on Fort Ord and was assigned as an assistant evaluator. That year, the Center submitted its five-year cost-effectiveness analysis to the Pentagon, showing the Army a \$85M benefit. Subsequently, General Edward Meyer, Chief of Staff of the Army, was pleased with the results and wanted the Center to expand into other units.

Being a combat arms guy, I quickly recognized that the school's training best fitted consulting in support units — not combat arms units. So, during my two-and-a-half-year assignment, I pushed for and helped create training that taught consultants how to be more readily accepted by line unit personnel, as well as arm the line unit with ways to create a high performance battle staff (HPBS).

**Lesson Learned:**

The high performance battle staff training included teaching the unit the characteristics of high-performance behavior that set them apart from their peer units:

**C1:** Had a clear value-based mission objective/goal.

**C2:** Defined and built contingency reactions into their battle plan.

**C3:** Actively sought positive AND negative feedback on their unit performance.

**C4:** If needed, conduct a planned contingency or implement a new one.

**C5:** The result was that they were faster and better learners than their enemy. Plus, team self-trust grew stronger and stronger with quality feedback and more and more successes.

Because of my HPBS actions, OECS sent me to “observe and comment” on the OPFOR versus Friendly unit maneuver training at the National Training Center in the Mojave Desert. Later, in early 1982, I shipped out on my way to CGSC.

**Colonel Wass de Czege's Initiative**

While I was at OECS, CGSC instructor Colonel Huba Wass de Czege recognized the command and staff weaknesses in generating effective win plans. As documented in Wikipedia, “. . . In 1981, Colonel Huba Wass de Czege convinced Lieutenant General Richardson, . . . Commandant of the Command and General Staff College, that a second year of military education was needed for select officers to fill a gap in U.S. military education between the CGSC's focus on **tactics** and the War College's focus on grand strategy and national security policy.”

Colonel Wass de Czege's concept for win plan training for CGSC-level students was approved. He initiated the program with an Operational Art option given to the top scorers on the overall entrance exam at the beginning of the 1982-1983 CGSC class. Sixty volunteers participated in this program during the regular CGSC course year. They completed an abbreviated version of the program of instruction used for the first class in



the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) This initial test of the curriculum included staff rides and a research project done in teams of four. Wass de Czege realized that the additional workload on top of the regular CGSC requirements would be very challenging for the participants. With that in mind Colonel Wass de Czege initiated the full second year SAMS program in mid-1983 that graduated thirteen officers in 1984.

Unfortunately, in the early-80s, I, and nearly all of my peers, did not benefit from Colonel Wass de Czege's initiative to change the standard way that CGSC taught the Army's Military Decision-Making Process documented in Field Manual FM 101-5. As had been done for years, the classroom training pushed us to select only one course of action against the most likely enemy course of action, did not require us to devise contingency responses, and was not challenged via role-playing with surprise enemy actions.

However, I contributed well enough by leveraging the high performance battle staff insights I gained at OECS to be the only 82-83 CGSC graduate to be awarded a Commendation Medal.

### **Contingency Win Planning In Korea**

The result was that CGSC class 82-83 left with the teaching we got and combined it with our ingenuity (Like my 10-Step list) to handle the missions we were assigned after graduation.

In my case, by June 1983, I was a major and the S-3 operations officer of the 1st Bn 31st Mechanized Infantry positioned just south of the Imjin River. It was my second tour of duty in South Korea. Halfway through that tour, our unit was ordered to take over patrolling the American sector behind Joint Security Area-Panmunjom, known as the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea.

As our officers and senior NCOs toured (reconned) the sector, we spoke with our counterparts, seeking their insights and suggestions. During that time, I confirmed that the North Korean unit guarding their side of the DMZ was a dangerous permanent stationed unit, was well aware of U.S. patrolling habits and routes, constantly monitored the battalion radio network, continually observed our day and night movements from guard towers sprinkled around our sector poking into North Korea like an arrowhead.

On my own, I recognized that the North Korean strength of constantly monitoring all of our radio traffic placed them on a leash, where we could feed them misleading information. Another beneficial factor was that fog, sometimes for hours, blocked North Korean visibility of our patrols.

Additionally, I asked the current in-sector S-3 and Brigade Operations for a lesson-learned book with information from previous sector defender units. No such book existed. I concluded that the rotation process repeatedly caused a rookie U.S. unit to face a

dedicated, highly experienced opponent skilled in recognizing weaknesses in the performance of the arriving American battalion.

However, one excellent Division policy was that Sector battalion commanders had to have previously served in South Korea. That experience reduced mistakes while we operated in the DMZ.

Returning to base camp, I started planning, for the Bn Commander's approval or adjustments, on how our unit could successfully perform the mission. I did that with a bias that I gained after my first tour. It rose because of North Korean's 1976 premeditated, daylight axe murder of two American officers and the wounding of five South Korean soldiers trying to cut down a tree in the Joint Security area. One of those officers, Captain Bonifas, was a West Pointer.

My bias was because no American officers or soldiers overwatching the tree team fired upon the North Korean attackers. That caused me to conclude that the North Koreans had accurately assessed that they could get away with the ambush because the American chain of command would not use deadly force within the DMZ to protect its soldiers. We were expendable!

That bias was reinforced when we toured the DMZ. Camp Liberty Bell had no cement block houses or other means to protect the headquarters and line unit soldiers rotating in and out of the DMZ. Should the balloon go up and enemy artillery rounds come slamming in, only tent cloth would protect us. We were cannon fodder!

I additionally learned that the rule of engagement followed by South Korean units flanking our sector was that their patrols carried loaded weapons and had the authority to shoot to kill if probed by North Korean units. That was not the U.S. rule of engagement. U.S. patrolling was conducted without any ammunition locked and loaded in our rifles. So, our nighttime patrols would give away their position if the soldiers needed to load to protect themselves from a nearby North Korean probe.

To me, all of the above sent a message to the North Koreans that the Americans were weak and unwilling to fight. A better message would be that the 1-31<sup>st</sup> mission isn't a game; we are serious about holding and defending this boundary between freedom and dictatorship.

Beyond my bias, as I had been taught, we needed an offensive mentality while accomplishing a defensive mission. Especially since the North Koreans had periodically probed into the American and Korean DMZ sectors during the last ten years, as well as built underground tunnels opening into South Korea.

So, the win-plan I provided the Bn Commander considered how to handle three possible scenarios:

- #1 Most likely, the North Koreans would NOT probe us.
- #2 Low probability that the North Koreans would probe us.
- #3 Unlikely, but possible that a serious incident outside the DMZ would trigger the North Koreans to shoot or attack into the DMZ.

Thus, the win plan was intended to ensure we did not trigger an international incident **while** convincing the North Koreans that we could and would defend ourselves. That plan included crafting:

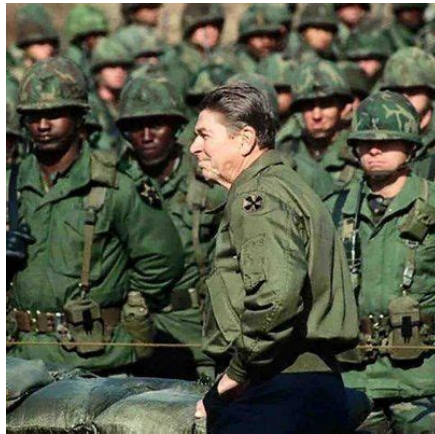
- #1 Patrol movements
- #2 Deceptive and informative communications
- #3 Telling the troops why we were patrolling and communicating the way we were to protect them while dissuading the North Koreans from probing into our sector and defeating them if they did probe. We also instructed the troops that they could and should respond with deadly force if they were threatened or actually faced deadly force from the North Koreans.
- #4 Updated our artillery targeting list.

The Battalion Commander approved 39 of 40 different types and sizes of patrols or in-sector activity. They were foot and mobile patrols I crafted to keep us from establishing a defensive pattern and provide us with several contingency ways of patrolling. For example, patrols within 200 yards of the sector's outer boundary were required to show our preparedness to deliver covering fire during bounding overwatch when half of the squad would move forward while the other half held its position. We would also demonstrate our ability to move reserve units into the sector rapidly. Also, by using cover and concealing vegetation and forecasted weather conditions, we would drop off ambush teams or hide the location of one or more, in-sector patrols. Each month, we re-sequenced the patrols and the number simultaneously within the sector. Because the Bn commander felt that one activity I recommended was "too provocative," he rejected it.

Notably, we successfully lobbied Division to approve allowing the lead and last soldier in each patrol to lock and load live ammunition following the pre-patrol procedure I wrote for safely conducting the patrol with loaded rifles.

Additionally, we periodically set up misleading, unsecured radio communications about where and what a patrol would do while actually doing a different patrol. Other communications would reveal live-fire training outside the sector where effective bounding overwatch was practiced.

Bottom line: we accomplished our mission, including securing the sector while the first U.S. President to visit the DMZ arrived accompanied by 120 media folks.



President Reagan Speaking to 2<sup>nd</sup> Division  
Soldiers at Camp Liberty Bell on 13 Nov 1983

### Postscript

Wikipedia documented the merit of Colonel Czege’s initiative for “an additional year of SAMS training at CGSC . . . to generate superb planners appeared first in 1989 during Operation Just Cause in Panama. Later in 1990-91, . . . eighty-two SAMS graduates, known as Jedi Knights, developed the corps-level ‘left hook’ strategy that led to Operation Desert Storm’s victory in Kuwait.”

One of those eighty-two was Terry Johnson, West Point class of 1970. He performed Jedi planning at the coalition force-level and did the same for the VII Airborne Corps’ Aviation Brigade, followed by helping execute the Brigade’s mission.

However, in 1999, while Desert Storm was ongoing, CGSC SAMS student Major Wilson Shoffner reported, “recent experience at the National Training Center (NTC) indicates that despite extensive work by the {evaluated unit’s} staff, many plans are discarded as soon as an engagement begins. This experience is consistent with Moltke’s adage ‘no plan survives the first shot.’” The takeaway from Shoffner’s reporting is that

contingency plans allow more rapid response to surprise, which is crucial for a unit's success.

Shoffner's comments about NTC are consistent with my experience in 1981 as an evaluator at NTC of the NTC process of force-on-force mech/armor planning and execution.

### **Lessons Learned**

The most critical question in this life experience is: Have you been taught how to win an engagement before issuing a field order? The following lessons may help you improve your how-to-win decisions.

**LL #1:** There is a world of difference between planning to win, issuing field instructions to those who will carry out parts of that plan, having the skill in the air or on the ground to perform the movement and delivery tasks for your part of the plan, and having the courage and leadership to lead your men and women to victory.

**LL #2:** If you **don't** know how your enemy typically fights — you're screwed! Move out and get any historical or previous battle intel about your opponent. Augment that learning by pushing your space, air, and ground "scouts out" to assess the terrain's avenues of approach and determine enemy locations. As stated in Wikipedia, that did not happen. In WW II when U.S. generals underestimated their unit's ability ". . . to maneuver through the Hurtgen Forest on the path to the Roer River in Germany. The strongly defended forest with its dense trees, deep ravines, and lack of roads proved a major obstacle and cost huge losses of American lives."

**LL #3:** If you **do** know how your enemy typically fights, you may recognize ways to defeat them by turning what the enemy thinks is a strength into a significant weakness including sucking them into an ambush. But beware — your opponent may surprise you by fighting differently than they habitually have. For example, on 11 September 2001, the Taliban made a Pearl Harbor surprise attack against the World Trade Towers in New York City. It was an entirely different terrorist engagement than those occurring for decades since the Marine Barracks attack in 1983.

**LL #4:** The combat learned saying that “no plan survives the first shot” reinforces the need to do contingency win planning, not just one plan you hope will work. The saying also encourages assessing what might go wrong, what your unstated assumptions are, and sending out recon units.

**LL #5:** Read the following books from cover to cover. Then, develop your own step-by-step methodology to decide how you will win an assigned military mission. Come up with a short-notice methodology and one for a mission months in the future. Consider my 10-Step and Quick Planning lists as helpful starters.

- ✓ *The Origins and Development of the National Training Center 1976-1984* by Anne W. Chapman, Office of the Command Historian, TRADOC  
[https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/069/69-3/CMH\\_Pub\\_69-3.pdf](https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/069/69-3/CMH_Pub_69-3.pdf)
- ✓ *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu
- ✓ *My Experiences in the World War*, by General Pershing
- ✓ General Rommel’s diary from WW I: *Infantry Attacks*
- ✓ General Rommel’s diary from WW II.
- ✓ *The Rommel Papers*, edited by B. h. Liddel Hart
- ✓ *Military Misfortunes -The Anatomy of Failure in War*, by Elliot A. Cohen and John Gooch
- ✓ U.S. Army Historian S.L.A. Marshall’s books:
  - *Battle At Best*
  - *Island Victory*
  - *Sinai Victory: Command Decisions in History's Shortest War, Israel's Hundred Hour Conquest of Egypt East of Suez, Autumn 1956*
  - *Vietnam*
  - *Battles in the Monsoon: Campaigning in the Central Highland, Vietnam, Summer 1986*
  - *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War*
- ✓ *Certain Victory, the U.S. Army in the Gulf War*, co-authored by Terry Johnson Class of 1970
- ✓ *The Military Decision Making Process - Time for a Change*, By Major Wilson A. Shoffner  
School of Advanced Military Studies  
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA381816.pdf>

- ✓ FM 101-5 *Staff Organization and Operations*

## Category: Arab Israeli War 1973

### Shoot Or Don't Shoot

Steve Homoleski D-1 29013

During the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, I served as Liaison Officer to the Air Force and spent long days in the underground Command Center at Hahn AFB in West Germany. At times, I would think about my troops manning their Vulcan and Chaparral air defense weapons and reflect on the many hours I had spent in aircraft recognition classes teaching them to distinguish between NATO and Soviet aircraft.

Those classes often seemed long and boring during the peaceful stalemate of the Cold War, but now, with the real possibility of a Soviet attack, I was relieved to have ensured our crews were prepared for this moment.

**Lesson Learned:** It is necessary to be prepared even for things that may at the time, seem very unlikely to occur.

## Category: Jonestown Guyana 1978

### Reflections on Jonestown

Alfred (Al) Lisi I-3 29319

I will never forget Thanksgiving week 1978 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. As the Deputy Logistics Operations Officer of the 46<sup>th</sup> General Support Group within the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps Support Command (Airborne). I was a Captain, filling the Major's slot as the Deputy Log Operations Officer while fulfilling my platoon captain duties as well.

The reflections of Jonestown, presented below, are based on the debriefing of the Graves Registration Platoon and Medical Clearing Platoon, who went to Jonestown to recover 914 bodies (913 Americans and 1 Guyanese). The reflections are done in the first person and are a composite of the troops debriefed by two other officers from the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and by me.

I could not go on the surprise mission because I was at an interview in Dallas for a post-service job with Texas Instruments. Fortunately, they made me an offer before I left the plant. Plus, being off base, no one in our unit's personnel office did a POR (prepare for overseas deployment) update of my records. Thus, I remained behind to coordinate any logistical support required by the deployed troops. I slept three nights on my air mattress in my office with direct communications to my boss in Jonestown.

The magnitude of the task was wholly underestimated. The Special Forces unit in Panama, sent a recon unit to evaluate the scene at Jonestown. But it never landed. It was an airborne recon. They estimated 300 – 400 bodies. What they did not see were the children who were under a parent. Thus, the initial need was more body bags and coffins.

## **Reported, Eyewitness Thoughts and Statements**

### **Comments by Deputy Al Lisi:**

Today is Monday, 20 November 1978. I enter my office at 0620 and the phone is ringing. That's unusual, for no one calls so early in the morning. COSCOM is calling! We are to stand by and gear up. Guyana is beckoning on the horizon. Our unique services and skills are required to recover Americans in an isolated town called Jonestown. Our mission is simple - recover the remains of a mass suicide.

It is 0630, and the word goes out fast. Now, we must prepare for a gruesome job - a thankless job. But we are the only ones who can perform the task. But am I ready?

We must plan in detail. What is the body count (300 – 400)? Are they so sure? What do we need to take with us? Who do we need to take? When will we go? How long will



the mission last? Who will assist? Who will be our Command and Control? My God, Thanksgiving will have little meaning for so many families!

Stand by! Preparation for overseas deployment! Green Ramp! Go, Go, Go! The watchwords for today are for real - this is no drill!

The waiting is terrible. No time to rest and too much to do before departure. Am I ready? All through the day and night, meetings and briefings. People and equipment are gathered and staged.

The 21<sup>st</sup> dawns with brilliance. We are packed. The day after the alert, the green light flashes, and the first plane lifts off for a long journey to Guyana in South America.

### **Comments by Deployed troops**

(Each stand-alone paragraph is a different voice/person.)

We received another briefing over the Atlantic from the command-and-control cell. We are scheduled to land at Georgetown and fly into Jonestown. We know our job. But are we ready?

The flight was long and tiresome. Our bones already ache, and we still have the awful task to perform. Touch Down! We have arrived in a hot and humid country. Our field jackets are no longer required; we roll our sleeves up, shirt tails come out for circulation. Strange, a chill started when we landed. It persists even in this hot, humid country.

Time to board our flights to the interior: cargo to fixed wing - troops to helicopters. It will be a short ride compared to our C-141 flight, but not any more comfortable. Almost there, we can see the camp. Downward, we plunge to land. Oh my god! I can't believe it. Bodies! Bodies everywhere.



Jamestown bodies, Photo source, Pinterest

As we get closer, the awful smell of rotting and decaying bodies rises from the earth to welcome us to Jonestown. There is no escaping the smell, for it is everywhere.

My God, My God! The scene is terrible and tragic. Death did not take a holiday in Jonestown. He worked overtime for this. It is a horrific scene of children, elderly couples, and many others. Arm in arm, all dead. A mass suicide of a frightening magnitude. Why did all these people come so far to die? What emptiness did they possess for them to kill themselves?

We are briefed on our functions. Now, it is time to work. Pick up a body and put it in a body bag, then on a helicopter for the flight back to Georgetown. Flies and maggots are everywhere! Oh, God! the head fell off. Maggots have eaten through the neck. The body fluid flows over me. No time to shed a tear. I must continue to put the bodies in bags. The first child is put into a bag. So tragic to be robbed of life so young. A crime against humanity by this cult at Jonestown. It's not fair!

Another body to bag. On and on, it goes with no time to stop. It is tiresome now that the weather and work are beginning to take their toll on us. "Lunch time!" someone yells, but I am not hungry. My mind is on my job and the task at hand. It continues through the afternoon and into the evening. In all, we bag 40 bodies and evacuate them to Georgetown. The task is more than the graves registration unit can handle. We need more help. Must get the medical clearing unit here.

Now, it is time for sleep. Our hands, clothes, everything is full of death. I change into something clean but can't get the smell out. It is always there. Now, I know why I had that chill. I've seen death; I've met death. It is gruesome and oh-so tragic. Will we ever know why it happened?

Some of our troopers began looking through the files and the records. The camp kept good, detailed records of all that happened. The doctor's fees were unreal: \$100 for this, \$100 for that, a rip-off to end all rip-offs. None of the cult members questioned it. How pathetic this all seems.

Funny, no graves are seen in the camp. I understand they found two. That doesn't make sense. Since 1969, only two people have died. But there are so many old people. If there are no graves, where are the bodies? The nearby Parana Lake? Not even the cult leader could do such a thing.

Tired, my mind is wandering off to sleep. I have to get some rest, for tomorrow will be another long day. I can't sleep too well. Too tired, and the smell still lingers. It's time to get up; the planes are coming for the bodies we must bag.

Finally, more people arriving to help. People from all over - a real joint effort. We've got our act together – it's a great feeling. We are ready. Bag a body, put it on a plane, off you go. See you soon when you return for another load. I wish I were on the plane heading out of here. But the job is not done.

More documents were found, much on socialism and communism. The Jonestown cult was a farce, a rip-off of susceptible people. People with no hope of anything. The cult leader, Jones, should have lived to be executed so society could balance her scale of justice. Too often, the guilty get off, and only the innocent suffer and die. All those innocent children.

He was a mass murderer, a Hitler personified, but he, too, got away with his crime. We need to quit protecting the guilty and begin saving society. We have subjugated the rights of society to the rights of the individual. And so, society suffers. The innocent are hurt. The guilty go unpunished. When will we wake up? Our stuffed-shirt politicians in Washington, the liberal courts, and the sham lawyers must be stopped. America must get tough with crime and criminals. They must be punished.

Who is Mr. Mugs? We found a 200lb chimp shot three times in his cage. What did he do? What do the records say? Mug, was used as an enforcer of punishment. He beat people up when they refused to do what "dad" wanted. God, I hate Jones and those like him with a burning passion. I want to lash out at him for what he has done. He has defiled humanity by his actions.

Another plane is off. More bodies on the way out for the long trip home. Bodies under bodies, the count is far greater than imagined - more than 400, more than 500, and still counting. The bodies are in bad shape and falling apart. It is too much to take, but I cannot stop - must go on. It is my job to treat each body with dignity and respect. They deserve at least that much. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving.

More bodies. Some among the crops, some on the sidewalks, walkways, in and near huts, most around the pavilion. Arm in arm, whole families, in some cases, were exterminated.

More people are coming in to assist us, and the workload is not so heavy. But the smell lingers, and my chill is still there.

It is incredible what these poor people carved out of the jungle. Their crops included bananas, eggplant, oranges, pineapples, grapefruits, beans, honey, and peppers.

The village is quite a layout. Bunk beds were built, sewing machines, a nursery, woodcraft shop, welding shop, radio shack, school rooms, and a dispensary creating a city carved out of the jungle. For what appeared to be a very civilized surrounding, this mass suicide confounds me. Why?

We were told that the people committed mass suicide by drinking Kool-Aid mixed with cyanide. According to the local villagers, armed guards stood around to make sure that everyone took the deadly mix. If the drink didn't work, then cyanide was injected into the person. But we will never know how many people died that way. Their bodies are too decomposed to determine. Time to sleep again and rest before more bagging will begin at 6 a.m.

It is Thanksgiving, a day of thanks for being alive. A day of thanks for not being so alone that someone like the Reverend Jones attracts you to do whatever he says, even suicide.

The search continues through the cult's records for the answer to why it all happened. They kept meticulous records. Thank God they did not destroy the records before committing suicide. Or maybe it was an oversight, something "Dad" overlooked.

Maybe the truth will be found, and Jim Jones will be exposed as a maniac. Money records were found today. Over one million in cash and over a million in endorsed social

security checks. They also found a grave belonging to Jones's mother, Lynetta Jones. The tombstone reads:

'In commemoration of a true fighter for justice who gave the ultimate, who gave up her son so he could serve the people. In the struggle for justice, for freedom from oppression, and for the foundation of socialism.'

Jim Jones was an avowed communist. Pamphlets all over, tapes as well. He was a pure political commissar of the old Stalinist regime. Wouldn't the news media have a field day with the records? But the area is blocked to them. But, only through exposing what the Peoples Temple really existed for, can others be forewarned of similar cults.

On and on went the bagging of bodies after Thanksgiving came and went. So did Friday, as the body count grew. All done! The last body is flown out, number 914. Many older folks, children, and some whole families.

Will the truth ever be known? But politics will interplay as always. I suspect the truth will die like the people did, well-planned and executed. Soon, the world will forget that Jonestown ever existed. That is the real tragedy and the chill I've felt all week.

Homeward bound. Another six hour flight. It feels good - time for some sleep. My body is exhausted. My mind is beyond exhaustion! We're home! It is cold; field jacket time again. But I can't find it. We must have burned it with the other gear we left behind.

So long as I live, I shall never forget that first sight of Jonestown. Nor will the others who were there.

The real tragedy of the entire episode is that the world will forget because forgetting requires little effort to clear the mind's memory bank. Remembering requires some

physical effort to prevent a similar happening. But I fear we live in an apathetic society. When will the public learn? When will they be ready to lead again? They are mere pawns and are always led by a few key individuals who, in effect, rule this land. How sad that our society has turned its back upon her fellow man. Soon, all backs will be turned against our society, and we shall be like an island – alone and surrounded. The death knell will strike again. But will we be ready next time?

### **Operational Readiness Lessons Learned**

The ORLL that I and the two TRADOC officers completed was eventually forwarded to the Pentagon.

#### **Strengths:**

- ✓ The original reported number of bodies was only 43% of the 914 recovered. Thus, the 46<sup>th</sup> GSG did not have enough soldiers for such a massive task. However, they did not allow themselves to be overwhelmed. Instead, they accomplished the mission. Due to the number of bodies, the Medical Clearing Platoon personnel were brought to Jonestown from the Capital to bag and tag the bodies. Thus, they did not perform their actual mission.
- ✓ We sent home to America more than twice the original estimate of dead people. We successfully processed the largest mass suicide in history.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- ❖ Aerial flyby mass casualty estimates were way off by 63%. Ground verification is needed in mass casualty situations to ensure accurate logistics support by ground and air forces.
- ❖ Group leaders and troopers were routinely assigned to special or extra duties taking them away from their primary roles. For example, at Fort Bragg, the graves registration platoon sergeant had special duty. The Platoon Sergeant's daily assignment was as the Colonel's orderly. He had served two tours in Saigon mortuary and saw every type of dead soldier one can imagine. Yet after Jonestown, he needed drug and alcohol counseling.

- ❖ The Group's recovery, graves registration, and identification platoon personnel were not adequately trained for their duties to handle mass dead. Their scheduled training should have included working in hospitals, emergency rooms, mortuaries, or county/city morgues to improve their identification, fingerprinting, and body-handling skills. In the event of a war in which chemical or biological agents are used, mass casualties, similar to Jonestown, quickly become a reality, and the troops need to be prepared to handle the situation.
  
- ❖ The command was not prepared to receive returning soldiers traumatically impacted by the gruesome work they were forced to do. Several soldiers turned to heavy drinking to deal with depression – now called PTSD. Severe stress during the mission triggered a heart attack in the Log Operations SGM. He suffered another attack a few months later, and he was medically retired.

### **Postscript**

After the ORLL was submitted, I heard from members of the Quartermaster Corps in the Pentagon who said the field reports confirmed operational weaknesses that the QC had been warning senior commanders about.

## **Category: U.S. Turkey Cooperation 1982**

### **Be Or Not Be A Whistleblower**

**Steven Rank B-3 29009**

From 1982 through 1984, I served as the Area Engineer for Turkey, including chief of a civil engineering group responsible for awarding and managing contracts for all major U.S. military construction projects in that country. Our projects were the largest infusion of new U.S. construction at Turkish bases in several decades, totaling what today would be several hundred million dollars, which went a long way in Turkey. Our headquarters (HQ) and some projects were at a co-located U.S./Turkish air base commanded by the host country's Air Force. The U.S. forces were the guests and permitted to project power



to support largely U.S. governmental objectives aimed mainly at the Soviet Union. At the time, the Turkish military had taken charge of the Turkish Government and was operating under emergency conditions.

The base facilities by U.S. standards, were sub-par, old, and worn out but kept neat and clean. Few funds were available to the Turks for maintenance, let alone new construction. The Turkish Government had approval authority over U.S.-funded contract starts, and we had to seek approval for all imported materials indicating unavailability in Turkey. Also, we relied on the Turks for base access for ourselves and our contractors.

Things were proceeding according to plan, which is to say bumpily, as we were required to use Turkish contractors, exclusively. Our small and medium-sized projects did not attract the larger, more sophisticated international builders. So, we had to monitor closely and coach the smaller ones on U.S. building and safety standards. We pushed each project along as fast as possible and kept the pressure on them to build well and safely for our USAF client. However, several Turk contractors had complaints. The Base staff was quietly diverting part of their concrete mixer trucks away from our projects – maybe two truckloads per week – to a new Turkish officer swimming pool. Such was the culture in Turkey. What to do?

I turned to my number two, a competent and seasoned 25-year veteran of overseas Corps of Engineers work. He was incensed and wanted to take this directly to the U.S. Embassy. Our organization was unique because we were chartered for work by the Turkish Government and could communicate about issues through the U.S. Embassy. Since he did most of the coordination with our Germany Headquarters, I assumed he had discussed this ongoing issue with them and what we intended to do. Having not heard to the contrary, I was ready to act and take charge of the situation.

In retrospect, I should have confirmed that he had discussed our intentions with our HQ. Having not done so, I had second thoughts about proceeding but hastily went along with him, as my West Point-engrained honesty and integrity lights were flashing red. Looking back, all I had in the way of evidence were the verbal complaints of our Turkish contractors.

So, we used the prescribed method to inform the Embassy about our problem. The staff there did not reply to us directly, and I didn't learn what actions they had taken until the Turkish Base Commander called me into his office and expressed his strong concern that his organization had to deal with such misstatements and unproven allegations. Our previously good relations with him were now somewhat strained. Plus, my headquarters in Germany learned of it then too. My bosses there were less than pleased by my actions without informing them beforehand.

All to what end: Our contractors continued to have problems getting on and off base, and the swimming pool continued progressing, perhaps a little more slowly. Also, I learned that “whistleblowers” are never popular with those they’ve implicated.

Years later, with more maturity, I have another way of assessing what happened. The Turkish Air Forces on base were living and working in inferior facilities. The U.S. was lavishing funds on our loaned facilities on Turkish soil. The Turkish Colonel commanding the base lived in a Quonset hut of WW II vintage. Although the Turks were used to austere conditions, he had to maintain morale among his command and needed to show concern for their well-being. As mentioned, they were the owners of the bases, and the U.S. was using them for programs of the highest importance to U.S. strategic interests. So, even though my sense of integrity had been chafed, was it a good idea to upset this redirection situation over what amounted to several hundred dollars per week in allegedly misappropriated concrete?

**Lesson Learned:** Were it now, I first would have gained proof positive that the misappropriation had occurred. Then, realizing this was a highly political issue involving sensitivities far above my pay grade, I would have communicated it personally to my HQ in Germany, asking for instructions on how to proceed.

## Category: Desert Shield/Storm 1990 - 1991

### Cyber Awakening

#### Thomas (Tom) Rabaut E-4 29010

In the Fall of 1990, I was the Vice President and General Manager of FMC's defense business when the call came in. It was not unexpected. We were directed to move 1,000 Bradley Fighting Vehicles from our factory in San Jose to the Port of Oakland, California. We were ready; the transfer began. Soon, the fighting vehicles were headed by sea for Kuwait and Desert Storm.

These infantry carriers were different than those that came before. They had advanced navigation and communication systems that let the commander to know better

where his unit, friendly forces, and the enemy were located. That knowledge is particularly critical during desert warfare.

But there was a vulnerability. What if the communication system was jammed? In later conflicts, a more advanced global positioning navigation system would be vulnerable to hacking. In retrospect, that was my first introduction to cyber warfare. As years passed, my company focused on the threats and opportunities that cyber offered. It quickly became apparent that cyber was an emerging battle domain, joining space, land, sea, and air.

Throughout the years that followed, I became increasingly involved in the emerging cyber war, both offensive and defensive. My involvement included addressing attacks on virtually every aspect of government, national infrastructure, and civilian business. Some were initiated by criminals, others by unfriendly state actors, all calamitous.

**Lesson Learned #1:** In my mind, it is the future and most destructive form of warfare. A well-conceived and executed cyber-attack on a power system can produce incredible damage. Weapon systems can be misdirected and destroyed from thousands of miles away. And the money required to create a meaningful cyberattack capability is much less than the cost of the conventional weaponry that it can neutralize.

Throughout my life, I often thought of West Point and wondered what role the Army and the Academy could play in the cyber war arena. Within the defense contractor community, many believed both the Air Force and the Navy were well ahead of the Army in developing a comprehensive approach to this emerging threat. Fortunately, under the leadership of LTG Rhett Hernandez, Class of 1976, West Point was beginning to field a more aggressive approach to the cyber threat. Courses were offered; the Army Cyber Institute was established, and an Army cyber branch was being considered and ultimately came to fruition on 1 September 2014. Class of 1970 graduate, Marshall Larsen, a fellow CEO in the Aerospace/Defense industry, gave meaningful support to the birth and expansion of that branch.

**Lesson Learned #2:** Upon experiencing all of the above, it struck me that the Class of 70 could deliver real value to the Corps of Cadets by sponsoring a Cyber Conference that addressed the growing threat and the warfighting opportunity that the cyber branch offers.

Plus, the gift to the Corps would also capture a key element of our Class personality. We are a group that looks to the future more than the past. We are made up of creators and innovators serving for the common good. We may not have many general officers, but we excel in business, law, medicine, government, the military, literature, raising our families, and more.

In 2019, several classmates and I, encouraged the Class to fund an annual Cyber Conference. The proposal was approved, and more than two million dollars were raised. The first Class of 70 sponsored Cyber Conference was held in 2022.

### **Postscript**

Our three Class endowments truly reflect our Class. Stemming from our motto, “Serve with Integrity,” is our gift of the “National Conference on Ethics in America.” Our MacArthur Cup Award emphasizes our Class drive for excellence in all that we do. And finally, our determination to look to the future of warfare is captured in the Cyber Conference. We want future cadets to know that our Class aspired to be warriors who lived an ethical life, striving for excellence with a view to the future for those who follow.

### **The Cost of Arrogance**

**Gilbert (Gil) Harper D-3 29104**

Army transporters move people, cargo, and information. This is not an easy task when you consider that millions of pieces of equipment and supplies must be delivered in the right quantity to the right person at the right place at the right time.

While serving on the Army staff, I was responsible for improving the systems that would efficiently track all the equipment and supplies during a major deployment supporting Operation Desert Storm in 1991. I visited my Marine Corps counterpart to see if we could combine resources to refine the current systems. He was a very articulate and bright officer but also arrogant. He didn’t need any help as his system was perfect. All I had to do was adopt it. He was not interested in any of the nuances we needed the system to accommodate.

Unfortunately, I was equally arrogant. We kept the meeting friendly and left, promising to talk again, which we did not. We both continued to work the problem independently and, thus, inefficiently.

**Lesson Learned:** Confidence is a desirable trait in a leader, but not when it grows into arrogance. We got the job done, but my ego made the solution harder and more expensive, and delivered it later than it could have been with a better Joint Operations effort.

## **Delivering Desert Storm Intelligence**

**Robert (Bob) Conte H-2 28883**

In January 1990, as a Lieutenant Colonel, I was sent to USEUCOM's J-2 (Intelligence) office in Germany. There, I was detailed to head the Joint Operational Support Element working in a big bunker at Ramstein Air Base. It was a detachment-sized conglomerate of soldiers and airmen from three different U.S. commands in Europe, along with DoD contractors from three companies. The element was not a TOE organization. Instead, it operated in accordance with loose memorandums of agreements between EUCOM, USAREUR, USAFE, and the stateside system-deployment Program Management Office (PMO). Our mission was to operate and maintain a Europe-wide, design-constrained, prematurely fielded NATO-releasable intelligence distribution system called LOCE (Linked Ops-Intel Centers Europe).

LOCE was still in development when it was originally deployed to Ramstein in 1982, well before the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. It was hastily deployed prematurely because the Supreme Allied Commander Europe had witnessed a demonstration of the developmental system said "We need this for NATO, and we need it NOW!"

User connections were limited to 60 transmit-receive ports in the LOCE Correlation Center at the Ramstein hub. Data was restricted to SECRET REL NATO, which meant it couldn't hold or display U.S. Top Secret or restricted intel. In addition, it held a database of the location and types of Warsaw Pact forces.

At that time, LOCE was primarily in use at major NATO Headquarters like SHAPE and its subordinate elements down to Corps level, plus Allied Tactical Air Forces HQ, Operations Centers, Intelligence Centers, etc., — all locations with plenty of space and power but limited requirements for mobility.

Whenever U.S. data was approved for release to NATO, U.S. intel centers sanitized it and manually entered releasable summaries onto their LOCE terminals for sharing with NATO elements. In 1990, those terminals were physically large, heavy, static workstations — "movable" but not "mobile." The system was more prototype rather than a refined tactical gear. In an era when MacIntosh and small personal computers had been available for years, our workstations looked like dodo birds.

Meanwhile, the LOCE Program Office had already delivered and activated hardware and software to 57 remote sites from Norway in the north to Italy in the south, plus Allied Command Atlantic in the U.S.

After my arrival, the initial months included LOCE participation in multiple NATO exercises, installations and training for three additional NATO sites, routine training for

new users throughout the network, and sending technical teams to remote sites for periodic equipment issues.

Then, the balloon went up in August 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait. Plus, President H.W. Bush decided to intervene and started forming a coalition of Allies, including NATO members. His intent: oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait. That decision got the wheels turning at EUCOM, NATO, and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). That included loading LOCE with intel data to inform Desert Storm coalition forces about types of Iraqi units, their capability, and location. Of course, USAREUR and USAFE pulled their people out of my element to help with their own command preparations. So, I lost all military staff except the Air Force comms people who kept the LOCE network online.

To support Desert Storm's intel sharing, we needed Iraqi data that the LOCE system could read. We also needed additional communication ports because almost all of our ports were allocated except a couple for training. In parallel, we needed to deliver LOCE workstations to support new Desert Storm users, like Turkey. As I recall, we needed six sets for assorted coalition users, but we did not have enough on-the-shelf terminals.

### Get It done

We met our get-ready-for-war challenge with the following actions:

- **Communication:** We couldn't add ports to the existing LOCE architecture. So, we requested multiple user sites, such as the Supreme Headquarters Technical Center, to temporarily give up their access so we could re-assign their Ramstein comm ports for Desert Storm users. There wasn't time to go through normal channels, so we dealt directly with the NATO offices and informed EUCOM later.
- **Training:** We suspended our routine user training schedule and shifted to training new users for Desert Storm.
- **Hardware:** The PMO could not help us with new workstations, so we met those requirements with our training systems and at least one workstation assembled from on-site loose parts.
- **Iraqi Unit Data:** DIA sent us a data tape of Iraqi data; however, it was a bigger challenge. When we ran the DIA data tape, it kept failing without importing a single intel record. I booked calls to the LOCE PMO and DIA, but they could see no reason that the data tape wouldn't load. I wasn't a computer whizz, but our ancient USMA Fortran IV class flashed through my head, and I asked my techs if LOCE

kept an error log when it imported data. It did. So, I asked them to interpret the system gibberish and see if there was any pattern to the read failures. There was. Every record failed to import because every Iraqi unit on the DIA tape was “unlocated.” Since the LOCE database design required, as a minimum, a location for every unit, the tape would not load. I immediately called DIA again and requested the current Iraq order of battle. Regrettably, DIA had zeroed out Iraqi unit locations after the Iran-Iraq war and had not yet updated them, even though Iraq had invaded Kuwait. Thus, there wasn’t time for DIA to create and send new data to us.

- Left on our own, I scrambled to overcome the blockage preventing sending needed intel to forward units. My detachment had a superb pair of civilian coders. I asked them if they could add an arbitrary location to every record so we could import and deliver the needed data later. We pulled up the LOCE map on the screen, and I selected a grid point in the middle of the Caspian Sea. The coders wrote a script to add that location to every Iraqi unit record as my coders re-imported the DIA tape.
- Next, we informed EUCOM and Desert Storm LOCE users to consider that grid location as the “unlocated units” stack. As coalition in-theater units determined actual Iraqi locations during the buildup to combat, they would send the intel up the chain of command. Quickly, it reached an in-theater LOCE workstation, which would update the database ,thus moving newly “located” units out of the “unlocated” stack. It was an insane kludge, but it worked. The result was that current enemy unit location data was loaded and live, literally with hours to spare, on 17 January 1991.

### **Postscript**

**Before Desert Storm**, there were grumbles in EUCOM and USAREUR about the extra work LOCE caused when their “real” work was done on U.S.-Only systems. However, after combat ended, many of the same people admitted that LOCE was useful in coordinating combat movements with coalition allies.

**During Desert Storm**, U.S. electronic intel was pre-sanitized and fed into LOCE for widespread Army, Air Force, and Navy use. After Desert Storm, we heard that USAF attack pilots “loved LOCE” to help plan their attack routes.

The only negative LOCE issue we heard was that the workstation we sent to the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, was damaged en route and couldn't be used. However, my element intel NCO that deployed forward to operate the system ended up impressing Turkish President Ozal and his generals with the NCO's old-school maps and acetate overlays. I recommended him for promotion to Warrant Officer. He later served in the Balkans and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 3.

**After Desert Storm**, the LOCE PMO started fielding new hardware that was dramatically downsized and mobile, along with significantly improved communication options. Maybe the PMO was "fired up" by Desert Storm. Maybe they were acting on old field suggestions, or maybe it was just part of the development plan. In any case, in late 1991, the PMO delivered the first vehicle-mounted LOCE mobile workstations to the Second Marine Expedition Force, to the Army's 2nd Armored Division (Forward). Plus, an Allied division successfully used another LOCE mobile workstation during REFORGER 91. The next year, LOCE used tactical satellite communications during NATO's transatlantic exercise TEAMWORK 92.

Additionally, the new downsized LOCE hardware was vehicle mobile, with dramatically improved communication options. The software database was also improved to handle smaller units like Russian Spetnaz special forces.

The Second Marine Expedition Force's LOCE teams were always helpful & ingenious (as well as faithful). For example, I was invited to an exercise in Norway above the Arctic Circle where they planned to test a new method of LOCE comms by bouncing signals off space junk. It worked, but I never heard if that technique later became a practical method. In any event, it was the last field exercise of my career, and I loved the Arctic rations, which were much like the LRRP rations of Ranger days, except for having white wrappers.

The next phase for LOCE was standing down operations at Ramstein AB while preparing to stand up operations at a new facility in the United Kingdom. I was forced to make several trips to Britain during the process. After REFORGER 92, I returned to the U.S. for retirement, and my replacement activated the new Joint facilities in the UK. At that point, LOCE had nearly 60 units in 11 countries. By 2005, the PMO fielded much more flexible hardware and communication architectures while growing the system to more than 500 units in 21 countries plus 28 surface ships.



## **Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** The 2005 deployed system was a refined tactical system. But I wonder if it would have been as successful or even fielded if the Supreme Allied Commander Europe had not insisted on field deployment in the 80s.

**LL #2:** Before the balloon goes up, conduct training scenarios where the high-tech fails and see how your troops perform. Also, brainstorm about what could go wrong. Encourage input from your NCO and enlisted personnel. They WILL anticipate something you haven't considered. Then, discuss backup solutions and update contingency plans. Always respect Murphy's Law. When conflict starts, the unexpected will bite your butt. When high-tech gear fails, the "old ways" can save the day if you drill them in.

**LL #3:** When the balloon goes up, other units may be swamped and can't support you in a timely manner, leaving you to solve your problem on your own.

**LL #4:** You go to war with what you know, who you have, and what equipment you're issued — not what you wish you had, and sometimes not even what you're supposed to have.

**LL #5:** If you find yourself in a national-level intelligence organization, don't let your Order of Battle team "clear the chessboard" after a war. Instead, quickly rebuild your database with all units and locations, even if your team is understrength and refitting.

**LL #6:** LOCE wasn't a traditional Army assignment, and I had no prior system development experience, but it was personally rewarding and mentally stimulating. My short experience with LOCE ended more than 30 years ago, but I remember the soldiers, airmen, and contractors as some of the finest and most dedicated people I ever worked with. Though they were different, they were comparable in spirit to the 3<sup>d</sup> U.S. Cavalry Regiment I served with at Fort Bliss in the 1970s!

I encourage any young Grads who read this life experience to consider an acquisition management assignment pertinent to your career field as a supplement to tactical and operational assignments.

I end with a saying often said by joint service sailors. “May your careers be blessed with Fair Winds and Following Seas.”

### **Missiles Away**

**Jeffrey (Jeff) Gault C-4 28908**

I was privileged to serve as the Deputy Commander of the 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (ODS) 1990 - 1991.

The brigade was one of the first units to deploy and provide air and missile defense throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ultimately, the brigade deployed seven battalions, predominantly Patriot. Those battalions defended the entire Kingdom with an eastern defense line from Dhahran to the Ports of Dammam and Jubail, along with a northern defense line from Tabuk in the northwest to King Kahlid Military City in the north, as well as Riyadh in the center of the kingdom.



Deputy Commander Gault visiting HAWK radar emplacement.

Once ground combat operations began, brigade elements proceeded into Kuwait and Iraq. We had a presence in the relevant senior headquarters and on Air Force Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) flights to deconflict targets and help overall air defense and coordination. I was the guy who had to move between all of them and coordinate operations with CENTCOM, 3d Army/ARCENT, USAF CENTAF, and other miscellaneous headquarters and units.

The Patriot missile was originally designed to defend against fixed-wing aircraft, and not to counter missiles. Recognizing the emerging missile threat in the late 1980s, the Army and Raytheon modified the system to defend against ballistic missiles. Initial software changes had been completed before ODS, but critical modifications to the missiles were required to be more effective in the anti-ballistic missile role.

Test missiles had been developed but not fully tested when we deployed, and our early deploying battalion had only four such missiles. Martin Marietta and Raytheon went into full-scale 24-hour emergency production to fill the need. As these new missiles came off the Florida assembly line, the Air Force flew a C-141 cargo plane to Saudi Arabia every day with eight new missiles. Fortunately, the five or so months of Desert Shield gave us time to barely fill all our launchers with new anti-Tactical Ballistic Missile (TBM) capable Patriot missiles.

Once the Scuds started falling and we began firing, we were in a just-in-time situation with our missile inventory. Always on the edge in being able to defend against the Scuds.

During the roughly six weeks or so of the air war, our Patriot units were some of the few Army organizations engaged in combat, fending off multiple daily Scud attacks aimed at airfields, ports, and cities. So, we got more than our share of VIP visitors and attention from CENTCOM and ARCENT leadership. Once the ground war started, these visits slowed. Although, with our Patriot batteries defending the nearby major cities and airfields, it was an easy visit for any congressional delegation or other VIP who wanted to "visit some troops." I often ended up having to go to various Batteries around the Kingdom and host a bunch of VIPs and media folks.



Brigade Deputy Commander Gault inspecting intercepted enemy SCUD missile debris.

**My Observation on Human Nature:** During the 10-year Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqis fired numerous Scuds into Iran and employed chemical weapons. Therefore, we fully expected that the Iraqis would use chemical weapons on us once combat operations began.

During the first days of the air war, the Iraqis began firing Scuds at the major cities in Saudi Arabia. When the nightly alarms began sounding to warn of these attacks, the sheer terror within many military personnel and civilians was evident. Military folks raced to put on gas masks and bulky Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP-4) suits with gloves, boots, etc., to protect against chemical, biological, or radiological threats. Then, they raced to the various underground shelters or Scud bunkers for protection.

What I found noteworthy was what we saw in the following weeks as the Scud missiles continued to rain down, particularly in Riyadh. We became very successful in engaging these inbounds with our Patriot missiles. So much so, that the urban and critical military sites or areas that we were protecting were not being hit. Then, later, during combat operations, because of our earlier successes, when the Scud attack alarms sounded, instead of putting on gas masks and protective gear, we now saw many folks running to grab their video cameras and race up to the rooftops to film the engagements.



11<sup>th</sup> ADA Shoulder Patch

**Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ The Defense Industrial base during ODS was responsive and adjusted to changing threats in a short amount of time. When needed, they produced weapons within their existing production capabilities and sustained the production to meet the demand.
- ✓ The Army has to accommodate Congressional visits even in a war zone.

- ✓ When an expected threat does not materialize, even in a dangerous situation, people can become complacent, drop their guard, do things they should not, and accept potentially dire consequences.

## 20 Years of Training Vindicated in Desert Storm

Terry Johnson D-3 29347

### Part I Background

Commissioned in Field Artillery, and then qualified as an Army Aviator, my career consisted of alternating between Artillery and Aviation assignments. I flew UH-1s in Vietnam and over the next 18 years I commanded two artillery batteries, a Division Artillery Aviation Section of 13 OH-58's, a Cobra Platoon, and a provisional battalion of Blackhawk and Chinook companies. Trained and experienced in two combat branches, I chose to remain in both when the Army created the Aviation Branch in 1983.

Perhaps my most impactful training experience was as the S3 of the 268<sup>th</sup> Attack Helicopter Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington from 1980 to 1982. Equipped with new Fully Modernized AH 1S Cobra attack helicopters, we were on the advanced cutting edge of executing aviation deep-attack missions in accordance with the emerging AirLand Battle Operations doctrine. While limited to day operations for TOW missile antitank missions, we practiced deep attacks, joint air attack team (JAAT) missions with Air Force A-10's, and missions well into potential enemy rear areas.

One major exercise was the Air Force Red Flag/Green Flag Operation at Nellis Air Force Base in early 1982. Our battalion self-deployed from Fort Lewis to Nellis, more than 1,100 miles. For this exercise I led our element of which was a slice of the headquarters and a reinforced Cobra Company. During the two-week exercise we executed flight and gunnery operations on the fully instrumented Nellis Range.

The Green Flag portion of this exercise involved state of the art Electronic Warfare—jamming, radar, and offensive EW. We flew day and night at nap of the earth altitudes teaming with Air Force A-10's to attack targets on the range. Aggressor fighter F-5 jets attempted to engage our aircraft unsuccessfully. All was videotaped and reviewed daily.

**Lessons Learned:** Short of full night capability and Hellfire missiles that the AH-64 promised, we were validating deep attack tactics and procedures and accumulating invaluable experience.

Between 1982 and 1989 I attended Command and General Staff College, taught tactics at West Point for three years, and then served as the Aviation Center's Liaison Officer to the French Advanced Combat Helicopter Center. All three assignments capitalized on and reinforced the training I'd done for deep attack operations. Indeed, the French were in the process of developing an Air Assault Division and drew heavily on me and my connection to Fort Rucker to structure training and employment of this new capability.

I did a consecutive overseas transfer in 1989 to become the Operations Officer of the 11<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade in Illesheim, Germany. The 11<sup>th</sup> had the first operational Apache unit, the Second of the Sixth Cavalry, which had deployed to Germany for REFORGER from Fort Hood, Texas, and stayed. A second Apache unit, the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 229<sup>th</sup> "Flying Tigers" had joined the 11<sup>th</sup> and would be followed by the 6/6 Cavalry in late 1990. The brigade had a general support battalion in Stuttgart and Chinook and Blackhawk companies at Schwabisch Hall. These latter units were in the old configuration with Majors in command. We would combine them into a single Task Force under the command of the Deputy Brigade Commander for Operations, my position in the brigade.

### **Pre-Desert Shield: January to September 1990**

In the spring of 1990 USAREUR participated in the last REFORGER operation. As part of VII Corps, the 11<sup>th</sup> Aviation would support and execute both deep attack and deep air assault missions. The emerging doctrine for these operations called for extensive planning, careful routing, Suppression of Air Defense plans, and meticulous attacks into designated Kill Zones using stand-off Hellfire missiles to defeat enemy armored formations. Executing multiple missions honed the brigade and reinforced detailed battle drills from teams to companies to battalions. Positioning of Forward Arming and Refueling Positions (FARP) was a critical aspect of these operations.

At the outset of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait USAREUR alerted the Vth Corps 12<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade to deploy in support of deploying American Army forces. As they only had one AH-64 Battalion ready, our brigade got orders to deploy a brigade Headquarters element and one of our Apache battalions. As a Lieutenant Colonel, I was designated as the detachment commander. We began a frantic deployment drill assembling essential supplies and contracting rail and other transport means. After two weeks we were taken off the deployment order. Wisely, we did not stand down.

Deploying forces from both Europe and the U.S. rapidly overwhelmed shipping and aerial transport through August. The CENTCOM Commander, General Schwarzkopf, requested additional medevac helicopters from Europe. With no ships or air transport available, the Medevac Battalion would self-deploy from Germany via Italy and islands in the Mediterranean to Egypt and then on to Saudi Arabia. This would be done, in two flights of six, a week apart.

The medevac UH-60 aircraft were not configured for overwater or long-distance flights. To ensure their safe crossing of the Mediterranean, USAEUR tasked the 11<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade with escort responsibilities. We had a four-ship detachment in Cyprus supporting the U.S. Embassy in Beirut during the time the Beirut International Airport was closed. These Blackhawks were specially configured with internal extended fuel tanks, Omni Radio Navigation, Satellite Radio, and rescue hoists. The aircrews were trained in survival water skills and qualified for both day and night landings on ships. The Blackhawks were part of the Task Force I commanded. I had to be qualified for this mission.

Whenever we flew the, then-classified, Beirut Air Bridge mission, we activated a satellite teleconference that included our headquarters in Illesheim, Germany; the State Department in Washington, D.C.; and Department of the Army Operations at the Pentagon. This network tracked our progress and provided linkage to air or sea assistance should we need it. The State Department also provided international clearance for this multi-nation operation.

I flew the second iteration of this deployment. After commercial flights to Cyprus began, I joined our Beirut Air Bridge detachment. There we launched two UH-60s from Akrotiri on the south coast to fly to Santorini, an Italian resort island. The six medevac aircraft from Germany met us there. We led them to Rhodes and overnighted on that island. The next day we escorted them to the Kastelorizo Airport on the Island of Megisti off the coast of Turkey. Two CH-47s from Italy with full internal bladders of JP8 met us there to refuel the medevac Blackhawks. This was a combat technique involving hot refueling. We were in and out in less than an hour for the next leg.

From there we flew a little over two hundred miles to Paphos, a large city on the southern coast of Cyprus. We would overnight there, refuel and then fly the next day to Port Said, Egypt. The medevac crews had purchased off the shelf GPS equipment which they planned to use to navigate overwater. They laughed at us and said they didn't need our escort due to this capability. Our Omega navigation systems were very reliable, depending on long wave radio signals from ground stations globally positioned. We also had extensive overwater day and night flying hours, which they lacked.

Enroute to Paphos at night I received a call from the medevac lead, asking sheepishly for help. They had lost their GPS signal and were out of sight of us. My instructions were to close on us and stay in sight. Another call notified me that one of their Blackhawks had a bad main rotor blade. If it could not be replaced, they could not continue the flight to Egypt. I knew we had spare Blackhawk rotor blades at our base in Akrotiri. On satellite radio I asked the lieutenants that had remained there to request a truck from the British Army that ran that base and drive the replacement rotor blade to Paphos to meet us.

On final approach to Paphos that night, with the medevac helicopters tucked in closely behind me I was astounded to see a Blackhawk parked on the ramp — not just any Blackhawk, but one with wings! My erstwhile subordinates decided to fly the rotor to Paphos! Unconventional and probably illegal, but there they were. The medevac crews replaced the rotor and test flew the Blackhawk and had it ready to fly the next morning.

For the leg to Port Said on the Mediterranean coast we knew we could not get fuel from the Egyptians upon landing. We had hoses and hand pumps to pump fuel from our extended range tanks to the medevac aircraft to give them the range to make it to Cairo. We escorted them to Cairo and wished them well. After refueling they flew across the Red Sea and into Saudi Arabia. After getting pictures overflying the pyramids, we returned to Akrotiri, and I flew back to Germany.

### **Pre-Desert Shield Lessons Learned**

1. Always expect new challenges and remain flexible.
2. Innovation overcomes many obstacles.
  - a. Hot refueling a Chinook flight after rendezvousing with Italian units.
  - b. Use GPS, but beware of off the shelf equipment.
  - c. Use satellite radio capability to talk globally.
  - d. Imaginative officers taking the initiative to strap a rotor on the floor of the open doored Blackhawk.
  - e. Carry hoses and pumps to transfer fuel from auxiliary tanks to the aircraft without them.
3. In such a high risk and high visibility operation, having State Department and DoD oversight was invaluable.

## **Part II**

### **Deployment August 1990 to January 1991**



By October we anticipated being deployed with the rest of VII Corps to Saudi Arabia. The corps was standing down from Germany in the next year so deploying European assets to Saudi sites left the option of moving them to the U.S. after that deployment.

VII Corps received orders to deploy to Saudi Arabia in late October 1990. The Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Fred Franks, dictated a top secret warning order to the Brigade Commander, Colonel Johnny Hitt, and me to prepare to deploy, but not to share it with anyone. Consequently, we secretly planned and quietly initiated preparations. I flew our brigade Blackhawk to Rotterdam, the Netherlands, where it had the blades folded and was then loaded into the hold of a large ship. It would be among the first of the brigade aircraft to arrive in Saudi Arabia. I would lead our advanced party with the mission of finding field locations for all VII Corps aviation units in Saudi Arabia.

Upon landing in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia at the end of November, I commandeered a C12 airplane to fly to King Khalid Military City (KKMC) for an initial reconnaissance of the designated corps footprint nearly 400 miles west of the Persian Gulf coastal city of Kuwait. The C12 crew consisted of an Army Captain and a Lieutenant, both in Class A uniforms, freshly arrived in country after flying their plane from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I asked to see their maps to show them where we were going. They only had aeronautical charts with no topographical features. I would need to guide them with my map from the jump seat.

KKMC is a large installation occupied by the Saudi Arabian National Guard. Its airfield could handle commercial jets. We landed there and taxied to a ramp where I saw U.S. Blackhawks parked. While they refueled, I entered flight operations and met the battalion commander from TF 160, Lieutenant Colonel Dell Daily. I let him know my mission and asked if he knew of a place called Iraqi Pump Station 3 (IPS-3), one of the locations we sought to explore. He waved his hand in the northeasterly direction saying he was not sure but thought there was something on that general azimuth.

We took off and flew in that direction at about 1,000 feet. I told the pilots to descend to below 500 which they did reluctantly. I spotted something blue and flashing and directed them to go down closer. The C12 is a twin engine turboprop utility airplane. These guys were not comfortable below 500 feet. I pressed them until I could make out more details. There was a swimming pool in a complex of buildings and a hardtop runway on the east edge of the complex! I marked it on my map and directed them to return to Dhahran.

Our units were enroute but would not arrive before December. I requested a Blackhawk flight to take me and Lieutenant Colonels Roger MacCauley and Duz Packett to the place I'd found. MacCauley commanded the 4-229 AHB and Packett the 6-6 Cavalry

which was just arriving in Germany. We landed at the airfield without any knowledge of how to talk to anyone there. I was armed with a .38 caliber revolver. Packett asked me as we walked to the gate if I could handle the Mujahideen we saw with an AK-47. High adventure!

In the compound they led us to the Saudi man in charge. He greeted us cordially and spoke perfect English. Careful not to show the soles of my boots, which is offensive in the Middle East, I asked him what it would take for us to get permission to use the runway and position our brigade around his installation. He replied that he was surprised we had not simply taken possession of it. He then explained that it would require the authorization of one of the Saudi princes if we didn't want to commandeer it outright.

Back at Dhahran I told LTG Franks of our discovery. He said, "Good luck getting a prince's approval."

A week later I flew our brigade command and control Blackhawk to IPS-3 to set up the VIIth Corps airfield. We were south of the Tapline Road that runs the length of Saudi Arabia from the Persian Gulf to Syria roughly southeast to northwest. We were also just west of the Wadi al Batin, a dry water feature running roughly south to north and defining the western border of Kuwait. Two weeks later, just after Christmas, the rest of our brigade closed on our field position. Don't ask me how we got permission.

Colonel Jim Mowery came to our headquarters early in January. Jim commanded the 4<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade of the First Infantry Division. He was there to verify where his unit would go and to collect any other information he could. We had not seen each other since he took over from me as the S3 of the 268<sup>th</sup> AHB in 1982.

Once our units were bedded down, every night we conducted night training with flights from both Apache units. There was enough open desert for us to do live fire including Hellfire missiles. Most of the brigade went on night cycle sleeping during the day. My mission was to fly and man the command-and-control console with its multiple radios to relay orders and reports to and from the attack helicopter units. A Deep Attack Cell in the VIIth Corps Command Post provided target information. Mine was the sole link to this cell for the brigade due to anticipated distances and my aircraft having our only satellite radio capability.

The Air War began with LTC Dick Cody's Apache raid on an Iraqi air defense radar installation deep in Iraq on January, 1991. Within days of this mission Cody came to our position to show us the gun videos and brief us on how his mission went. We were all proud of him and how the Army kicked off this battle.

### **Desert Shield Deployment Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** Moving large units from CONUS or Europe to Saudi Arabia demanded every available transport means and we used them all.

- a. The C12 self-deployed as did the Blackhawk Medevac unit. This capability is slow and risky but essential.
- b. While CONUS units ate up air and sea transport, VIIth Corps used rail, road, military and civilian air, and extensive shipping. The Army's experience with REFORGER and the reception of three AH-64 units, one of which arrived in Germany in November 1990, proved invaluable.
- c. Reception in Saudi Arabia entailed reassembling aircraft off ships, test flying them, and then deploying them to field sites. It also required ground transport well beyond assets available to deploying units. The logistical effort was incredible.

**LL #2:** Deploying from ports and airfields to field positions from early December until late January was a massive project. When I overflew the eventual VII Corps airfield there was literally nothing on the ground between the Persian Gulf and our designated corps positions. By early January Log bases Alpha, Bravo, and Echo filled with vehicles and containers. From the air it looked like an Atlantic convoy from WW II. This capability, the training it demands, and the planning required are as critical today as they were then.

**LL #3:** Realistic training requires live fire of all systems. The Hellfire missile cannot be fired on ranges in Germany. We had been able to run one battalion through live fire with the missiles in Israel before deploying. Wide open desert in Saudi Arabia made setting up and running safe ranges relatively easy.

### **Part III - Combat**

The level of secrecy imposed by LTG Franks precluded me from reading our staff on and getting their assistance. I had to write the entire brigade order by myself. When we arrived in Saudi Arabia this restriction relaxed, and I drew our entire staff into refining my original work. In addition to the brigade S3, a Lieutenant Colonel, and the S2, a Captain, we pulled two Majors from the attack units to assist and to coordinate our planning at the Corps Deep Battle Cell. During January and February 1991, we rehearsed our plans with full flights. We also participated in a two-day wargame run by the Battle Command Training Program from Fort Leavenworth. This was the first and primary time we could do face-to-face coordination with other corps units.

Since we had no idea how long we would be in Saudi Arabia we began planning to build four hardstand heliports for our 11<sup>th</sup> Aviation units—enough to put all our aircraft on asphalt and off the sand. Our planners met with Japanese contractors to lay out these facilities. I was only peripherally aware of the details of this plan.

At dawn on 26 February 1991, I was in the left seat of our 11<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade Command and Control UH-60 Blackhawk with both engines spooling ready to launch our attack into Iraq on the first day of the Ground War. Sitting there, I asked myself the question, “What the hell are you doing here about to go into combat?” It had been eighteen years since I’d survived Vietnam. I was just over twenty years since commissioning. I’d left my wife and four children back in Germany, and here I was about to lead our brigade into enemy territory.

I’d had time to reflect on this and what had led up to that point in time when we weren’t flying practice missions during Desert Shield. Later, when we were writing our Desert Storm After Action Report, I would be able to put the pieces of my twenty-year career together and to marvel at how well-prepared we were for that challenging first day of the ground war.

My role was to plan and lead VII Corps Apache deep attacks from the brigade command and control UH-60 Blackhawk. I got to do two of these attacks, the second with our 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 229<sup>th</sup> Attack Helicopter Battalion, The Flying Tigers, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Roger McCauley, I was the first of our aircraft to enter Iraq in a blowing sandstorm. That night LTG Franks personally gave us orders to attack over 50 kilometers forward of the VII Corps lead ground elements—the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment and the famous Battle of 73 Easting led by then-Captain HR McMaster.

4-229 flew two turns on our target area well into Kuwait decimating the Iraqi 10<sup>th</sup> Armored Division. I maintained satellite contact with VII Corps Headquarters which received target data from the Air Force JSTARS. We would have continued the attack but were ordered to stop due to Air Force elements attacking in our target area. In the end, the cease fire on that very night ended our combat operations.

The great right hook with two corps abreast swept into Iraq and Kuwait and defeated the vaunted Iraqi Republican Guard and regular forces in 100 hours.



E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, June 2023

### **Combat Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** As co-author of *Certain Victory, the U.S. Army in the Gulf War*, I know of hundreds of lessons learned recorded in that book. I also know that the Army Center for Lessons Learned cataloged volumes of lessons. There is no point in recapturing them or subsequent lessons from more than a quarter of a century of worldwide military operations.

**LL #2:** The one lesson I carry to this day is that every day I had spent training for more than twenty years contributed to my readiness, confidence, and execution of my duties in Desert Storm. Perhaps key within that jewel is the essence of air-to-air and air-to-ground combined arms teamwork. But even more critical is the importance of a sense of duty. I drove myself and our units as hard as I could embracing the maxim that sweat in training saves blood in battle.

### **Part IV – Peace Talks**

After the ceasefire, General Franks then ordered us to mount an armed aviation escort to bring General Schwarzkopf to peace talks set for February 28 at Safwan in Iraq. I got this mission and, in addition to my Blackhawk, requested three Apaches from each of our two units, 2-6 Cavalry and 4-229. We flew to the recently liberated Kuwait International Airport where we would pick up Schwarzkopf in LTG Franks' Blackhawk. We refueled our aircraft there and waited. I monitored the Satellite Communications radio until receiving the order to return to our Forward Operating Base in Iraq. The talks were postponed until a date to be determined.

The now combat veteran Apache pilots suggested flying the route to Safwan in our planned formation to do a reconnaissance and dress rehearsal. I saw no reason not to and we departed flying the highway now known as the *Highway of Death* going north from Kuwait.

We flew over what looked like a tornado field of hundreds of destroyed combat and civilian vehicles. I thought of a giant playing jacks bouncing a huge ball on the fleeing forces escaping from Kuwait. The flight to Safwan was only about twenty-five minutes. We approached from the south, and I noted the airstrip there which we overflew without stopping. The six Apache aircraft were in a vee formation behind me and planned to break right and left when I landed in a show of force. There was no one there to see our airshow that day.

Back at our FOB we awaited notification for the next two days. On March 3 we got the go. Arriving at Kuwait International in our planned formation we were soon joined by LTG Franks and his Blackhawk which would carry General Schwarzkopf. It took up position tucked in behind me. Schwarzkopf arrived in a C-12, deplaned, and climbed in the Blackhawk with his entourage.

We took off in formation and repeated our overflight of the *Highway of Death*. I imagined the occupants of Franks' aircraft, seeing this for the first time, were as impressed as we had been.

As we approached Safwan I could not believe what I was seeing. There were dozens of M1 Abrams tanks arrayed on either side of the runway and a veritable circus of tents and other combat vehicles surrounding the field. As planned, I led the flight on an approach to land with me touching down first and Schwarzkopf's Blackhawk second. The Apaches peeled off at very low level on either side and regrouped to the south to our planned holding area.

I'd turned the Blackhawk ninety degrees to the left so I could see the other UH-60 discharge its passengers. General Schwarzkopf strode out smartly leaving LTG Franks and the others to trail him to the designated meeting tent. I shut down my engines thinking this was quite an historical event akin to the Battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay—well, not quite that significant. I had no idea how long we'd be there but knew we would do the reverse flight to return the commander to Kuwait when the time came.

I opened the left door of my aircraft only to have classmate Steve Cook confront me anxiously. Steve was the Executive Officer for the 4<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. His division set up the impressive display there. His boss was classmate Jim Mowery, Commander, 4<sup>th</sup> Aviation. Steve loudly informed me that I needed to get my

aircraft off the airfield right then or Mowery would be fired! Major General Rhame, Commander of the Big Red One, had given Jim that order.

I asked Steve if he didn't realize who I'd just delivered. He did, but he repeated the threat that Mowery would be toast if I didn't get the two Blackhawks off the airfield. Meanwhile, Colonel Mowery himself stormed up, took off his helmet, threw it down on the ground and looked at me angrily saying, "You got my ass fired, Johnson!"

I was unshaken and confident that I was fine staying put. Jim picked up his helmet, put it on, smiled at me and said, "Let's get a picture!" Here we are, and no he did not get fired.

**Lessons Learned:** Trust your best judgment even in the face of serious threats. Believe in our class brotherhood. Cooker was in my flight class and was one of our groomsmen. Jim Mowery had taken over from me as the S3, 268<sup>th</sup> Aviation Battalion at Fort Lewis, WA in 1982. He and I have been friends since walking the Area in 1968.



Left to Right: Classmates Jim Mowery, Terry Johnson, & Steve Cook

### **Post-Desert Shield**

Due to the success of our escort mission, LTG Franks called on me to lead a similar flight for a visit by General Carl Vuono, the Army Chief of Staff. While there was little threat on this mission, we still flew six fully armed Apaches. During the visit to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division site at Safwan Airfield I met General Vuono's two Aides-de-camp. The senior AdC was Lieutenant Colonel Chris Shoemaker, Class of 1971 from my D-3

Company. The junior was Major David Petraeus, Class of 1974, the youngest member of my Command and General Staff class and the top graduate.

As I caught up with both of them Dave said, “Sir, do you realize how lucky you are to be a veteran of this war? Only 10% of the officer corps got to participate in this fight!”

I replied, a bit presciently, “You’ll get your chance, Dave.”

As the Army began to withdraw from Iraq, following the “first in, first out” notion, the XVIIIth Airborne Corps pulled out of its western flank positions leaving the French 6th Light Division to cover the flank. VIIIth Corps would move some units west to replace the French. As a known French speaker, LTG Franks sent me to relieve the French.

I flew our command Blackhawk from our Iraqi Field Operating Base Skip to the French headquarters near As Salman Airfield. Upon landing a French Foreign Legion Lieutenant Colonel met me and led me to the tents housing their headquarters. Once in the tent I looked over three long tables lined with French generals and colonels before spotting an officer I knew.

The French Colonel shouted, “Johnson!” and bounded the length of the tent.

I responded, “Kerfysler!” and met him halfway with all the command and staff officers looking on a bit dumbfounded. During my assignment as the U.S. Army Aviation Liaison Officer to the French Combat Helicopter Training Center I had met Colonel Kerfysler, one of the instructors at the school.

With our little display completed I met the French Général de Division (three-star Major General equivalent), his deputies and the staff. No one asked me what a mere Lieutenant Colonel was doing relieving a French division.

We discussed the details and they agreed to leave their Aviation Regiment to fly cover on the southern half of the western flank. We would cover the northern half with an Apache battalion. We agreed to exchange liaison officers. Our brigade would do a relief in place within days. I would meet a French aviator, now a Major, who had been one of the students during my tour in France.

When we eventually got relieved to return to Saudi Arabia for redeployment to Germany, I had occasion to overfly Iraqi Pump Station 3, our former Corps airfield. Imagine my shock to see four fully built asphalt heliports surrounding the field!

**Category: In the Pentagon 1993**



## **Perpetuating Ignorance By Concealing It**

**Joe Reeder E-1 29138**

When I was nominated in 1993 to be the Under Secretary of the Army but not yet Senate-confirmed, I asked for briefings on the Army's top five challenges. One of those challenges was the Reserve Component Automation System (RCAS), a \$3 billion contract to better interconnect all components of the National Guard.

I learned that though the contract was only half completed, the contractor, Boeing, was already \$1 Billion over budget! So, I asked General Pete Kind, the C4I 3-star, to brief me. The hour-long briefing from LTG Kind and his staff left me understanding only about 30% of what I heard. So, I asked Gen. Kind's team to brief me again a week later. After the second briefing, I grasped about 60%. So, I requested a third briefing.



November 23, 1993 Joe Reeder being sworn in as the  
Under Secretary of The Army,  
With wife Kate beside him and daughter Julie holding the Bible.

At that point, my worried XO took me aside and told me the entire Pentagon was abuzz with rumors that the incoming Army Under Secretary was “retarded.” My classmates, God bless them, would say, “That’s the least of his problems!”

However, the third briefing paid off. Drilling down into the facts left me with a much clearer understanding of the problem. Much better were some serious fixes to get the job done cost-effectively. One of those fixes was relieving the 2-star General overseeing the program. The other significant fixes involved two contract modifications to eliminate performance requirements that, following our ridged scrutiny, were not worth the cost to the taxpayer.

Combining fresh oversight with more disciplined fiscal management stopped the hemorrhaging and saved the Army over \$700 million.

**Lessons Learned:** Not being or appearing to be stupid is important for any leader, but not at the expense of being sure you fully understand the facts.

For deploying high-cost, large technical systems, the “facts” include:

- ❖ Define the technical and delivery problems you face
- ❖ Current schedule and delivery status/issues/delays
- ❖ Current funding issues/overruns
- ✓ Purpose and performance attributes of the system being deployed
- ✓ Contractual specifications met, not met, or too many
- ✓ Technical challenges being faced by the contractor
- Strengths and weaknesses of the government and contractor management teams
- Candidate management, technical, schedule and funding fixes

## Category: Global War on Terror 2001 - 2002

### Pace University’s 911 Disaster Recovery

Frank Monaco B-4 29134

The following article was written by Frank Monaco and published in the EDUCAUSE QUARTERLY [Magazine 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2001](#).

## **IT Disaster Recovery Near the World Trade Center**

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, nearby Pace University faced emergency conditions in implementing its disaster recovery plan.

### **Preface**

“A great plan, vigorously executed, is better than a poor or incomplete plan, vigorously executed, and much better than a great plan, poorly executed, and much, much better than a poor or incomplete plan, poorly executed.” — Anonymous US Army Proverb

Business continuity planning, disaster recovery, and the Army concept of “continuity of operations planning” had been on my mind for the past four years as I transitioned from the U.S. Army to the civilian world of higher education. Although my job responsibilities stayed much the same, acting as chief information officer for the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, wasn’t exactly the same as being CIO at Pace University in New York City.

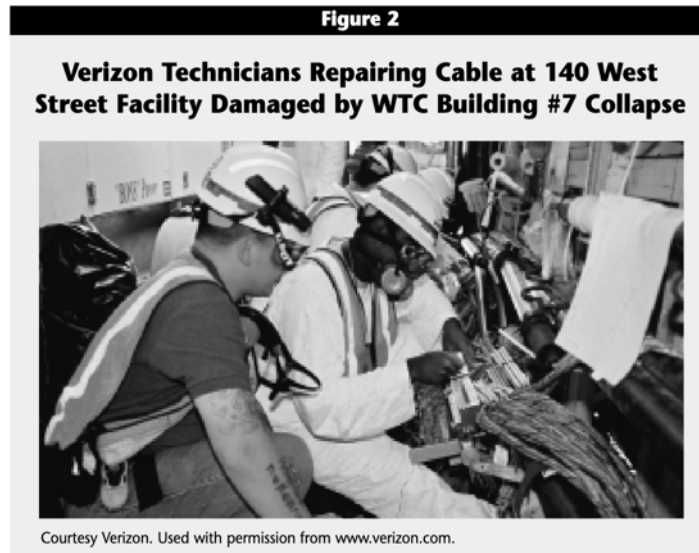


Charged with providing information technology services to more than 14,000 students and 2,500 staff and faculty, I was worried that we only had one of everything important at the university. Sure, we backed up our systems and took the tapes off-site regularly. Still, whenever an outage occurred — especially a server crash or disruption of a backbone internal network or the Internet — students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the public were immediately affected, and teaching and learning were interrupted.

Pace University's Division of Information Technology (DoIT) began taking steps about two years ago to minimize IT disruptions. Specifically, DoIT formed a committee to do something about these concerns while interfacing with the university's effort to build a comprehensive business continuity plan for areas other than IT. We consolidated mission-critical servers (including our Web pages, student information system, human resource system, financial system, e-mail system, library, and courseware systems) into a protected environment having a fire suppression system, an uninterruptible power supply with generator backup, and all-hours human oversight. We started to cluster our open systems mission-critical servers to get redundancy. We contracted for redundant backbone links. We occupied a single building on our Briarcliff Manor, New York, Westchester County Campus, making it Pace University's Information Technology Facility. We purchased a disaster recovery template document from the Gartner Group and began implementing the numerous suggestions and checklists contained therein. Sadly, the tragic events of September 11, 2001, interfered with the completion of our (and the university's) disaster recovery planning. Without warning, we faced the emergency implementation of our new plans in response to the appalling destruction in our city.

### **Disaster Up Close and Personal**

Pace University lost four students working in the World Trade Center (WTC) buildings and more than 19 alumni. The Pace University World Trade Institute (WTI) occupied the entire 55<sup>th</sup> floor of #1 World Trade. Thankfully and miraculously, our WTI staff and students got out before the building collapsed.



Pace University's primary New York City campus is less than three blocks from the WTC site, across the street from City Hall Park, making it the closest major university to the WTC. New Yorkers call this area "downtown." We also have locations in "midtown" Manhattan and Westchester County: the Law School and Graduate Center in White Plains, New York; the main undergraduate campus in Pleasantville; and back-office operations and dorms, including IT, in Briarcliff Manor, which is about 40 miles from the downtown campus. At the time of the attacks, I was attending a meeting in midtown Manhattan that might well have been scheduled for the WTC location.

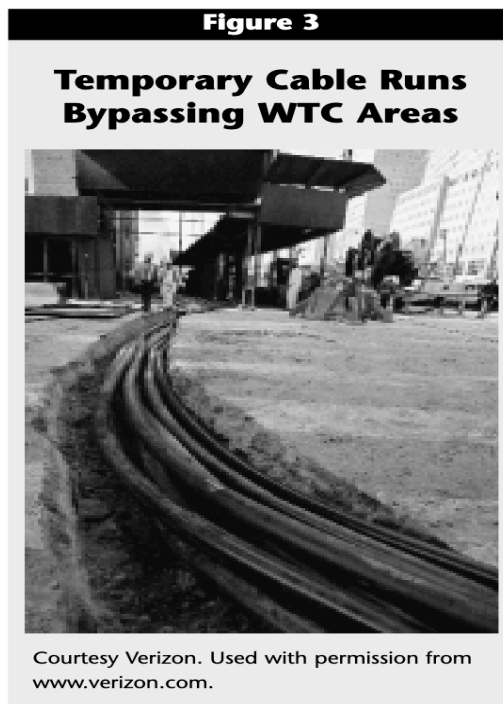
Because of the downtown university's proximity to the attacked buildings, our president and executive council set up an emergency command center at our mid-town campus. Then, they dispatched our executive vice president for finance and administration to our downtown campus.

Our main campus played an immediate role when the debris cloud from the devastating WTC collapse traveled down the back streets, forcing people toward our main campus buildings. There, they were assisted by our security professionals. The New York Police Department, Emergency Services, Port Authority Police, New York Fire Department, and National Guard set up triage and staging areas, in our front lobby. We

eventually had to evacuate the downtown New York City campus sites and dorms, sending students and staff to our Westchester locations.

### **Infrastructure Destroyed**

The Verizon facility at 140 West Street, possibly the largest and most complex telecommunications facility in the world, was severely damaged by the destruction of World Trade Center Building #7. Although not directly targeted, the building suffered massive collateral damage. (See Figure 1.) Circuits (more than 300,000 voice grades and 3,500,000 data grades) and equipment began to fail the evening of the 11th, and power eventually went out in the entire area.



At midnight on the 11th, I was amazed when I finally walked outside our midtown location near Fifth Avenue enroute to Grand Central Station. The city seemed deserted. I saw no people or moving vehicles in one of the all-hours busiest intersections in the world. In addition, United States Air Force fighter jets were flying combat air patrol high overhead. I will never forget that moment.

Early on the morning of the 12th, our Internet connectivity failed due to the Verizon facility's damage — debris, soot, fire, and water had finally taken their toll. (See Figures 2 and 3.) Our internal network connecting all the campus sites (except for the destroyed WTC location) somehow survived. We used a fiber distributed data interface (FDDI) for

the backbone network. However, our Internet service provider (Applied Theory) stopped working because it rode Verizon on both primary and alternate routes. We were off the Internet! We also lost phone service to Manhattan, including cell phones, for a short time because of antenna destruction and cell overuse.

### **Picking up the Pieces**

Our chief technology officer literally picked up our mission-critical external servers and moved them to a disaster recovery site (Xand.Com, in Hawthorne, New York). Our Domain Name Service (DNS) administrator contacted the Internic (which handles DNS changes) and re-hosted our mission-critical external systems there.

These systems stayed there for about on week. It took 24 hours for the new IP addresses to propagate but once done, our Web pages and e-mail reappeared on the Internet again. It was essential to have an Internet connection again because our downtown phones weren't working either, meaning parents, students, and the public couldn't contact our Manhattan campus sites. Because our Internet link to the disaster recovery site wasn't functional, our CTO devised an ingenious scheme to use dial-up networking to relay e-mail back and forth to our internal network. Once the Internet returned, we moved services from the disaster site back to our IT facility in Briarcliff Manor.

Also, during our Internet outage, our virus signature files weren't automatically updated, exposing and making us vulnerable to the W32/Nimda@MM virus. When the Internet came back up, infected e-mails had already arrived before the virus signature file updates. (Remember, we were relaying e-mail from the disaster recovery site.) We spent the first day back on the Internet cleaning up that mess.

Once we were allowed to reoccupy our main New York City campus, we obtained additional cell phones and published a previously well-guarded cell phone list of the university administrators. We also used instant messaging, LAN fax, and e-mail to communicate with the NYC campus for almost ten days until we got landline phones working.

During the university president's daily crisis briefings, we used my old Army Readiness report formats to keep our staff and customers informed of our systems' recovery progress. In the sample report shown in Figure 4:

Red = No Functionality Amber = Limited Functionality

Green = Normal Functionality ETR = Estimated Time to Repair

This approach worked extremely well because informed customers are happy customers.

I should stress that restoring IT affected by the terrorist attacks on September 11 was only a small part of the tremendous effort exerted by our president, executive staff, administrative staff, faculty, and students as we all started the long process of returning to some semblance of normalcy at Pace University. Our team came together from convoying students on deserted downtown New York City streets to our Westchester campus sites, to installing multiple megawatt generators, printing and “snail” mailing thousands of letters, cleaning offices, and finding space and equipment for displaced staff and students. I am happy that IT — and all the hard-working people on that team — have and will continue to play an essential role in this process.

Due to the immediate consequences of the September 11 attacks on the WTC for Pace University, we got a first-hand look at what a university needs to recover during a disaster. The lessons we learned cover a wide range of topics, some unexpected.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Have smart, energetic people working for you, especially your CTO and telecommunications director. At Pace University, these individuals were directly responsible for the vigorous execution of our less-than-great plan.

**LL #2** Make sure that your ISP has diverse routing. For example, the primary and alternate routes should not go through the same phone company’s dial central office or major Internet point of presence facilities.

**LL #3:** Identify a disaster recovery (or application hosting) site completely independent of your campus sites, with multiple ISPs. Rent at least one rack there. Develop a good relationship with the people who work there.

**LL #4:** Ensure that your disaster recovery site hosts either your primary or secondary external DNS.



**LL #5:** Have a good relationship with your wireless cell phone service providers. For example, we received free AT&T cell phones and service while our landlines were down.

**LL #6:** Have strategic systems equipped with dial-up networking access. Also, have a few notebook computers with non-university ISP access for loaners (say, 5 to 10 machines).

**LL #7:** Ensure you have cable or satellite (preferred) TV access in all public gathering areas and potential crisis meeting places.

**LL #8:** Maintain an accurate cell phone directory with university (and non-university) owned cell phones.

**LL #9:** If your Internet link goes down, ensure you obtain and distribute virus signature updates using dial-up networking before the Internet returns.

**LL #10:** Maintain alternate home email addresses for students, faculty, and staff. Also, prepare a well-advertised, non-university-hosted Web site (such as Yahoo Newsgroups) to get the word out in the event of a catastrophic Web page outage.

**LL #11:** Be ready to extract snail-mail rosters from your data warehouse for all conceivable university constituencies (for example, parents of Pace University's New York City dorm students....)

**LL #12:** Have toll-free numbers you can immediately "call forward" (with in-house staff) to telephone banks for university hotlines. We used a bank of 11 phones, staffed at all hours for the first two weeks of the crisis.

**LL #13:** Be able to publish these toll-free numbers quickly via various media and the Web for wide distribution and access by interested parties.

**LL #14:** Be ready to staff the emergency phone lines heavily and nonstop during the first days following the crisis. The Pace University emergency information number received

thousands of calls, handled by university staff and faculty who volunteered to serve as hotline operators.

For the September 11 disaster, I believe we had an IT disaster recovery plan somewhere between excellent and poor (meaning incomplete). Nevertheless, we did execute the plan vigorously, with notable success. Learning from that experience, I trust we will complete our disaster recovery plan making it an excellent plan ready to be vigorously executed next time. Of course, we hope that there won't be a next time, for any reason. Meanwhile, we continue to pray for the victims and the country while educating our students at Pace University.

### **Return From Retirement**

**Richard (Dick or Beahmer) Beahm B-4 29056**

In late 1991 or early 1992, the Army convened a board for "Selective Early Retirement (SERB)." That was one board that those of us "in the zone of consideration" hoped to never be selected. However, as it turned out, I was, as were some classmates and close friends.

At my retirement parade at Ft Myer, VA, in September 1992, to my surprise, I found myself standing beside my Academy classmate and good friend, John Norton. I think we both had mixed emotions about our reasonably accomplished Infantry careers coming to an end as a result of a SERB. I suspect John may have felt the need to add a touch of levity to our plight when he whispered, "Beahmer, I think we need to look at this a little differently. We should consider that we were selected "Below the Zone" for retirement. Now, doesn't that sound a lot better?"

As I considered John's suggestion, I realized this was an excellent way to assess our situation. I had felt poorly about being "kicked out" of the Army, but now I realized that finally after 22 years of service, I had received a "Below the Zone" selection. We both stood a little taller when the Old Guard marched by us, passing in review and officially recognizing John and I as retired Lieutenant Colonels.

Fast forward to September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and the terrorist attacks in New York City. I was not the only American who was ready to put the uniform back on and strike back during the emerging Global War on Terror. Within a week, I received an email from an old Army

buddy (not a classmate). He outlined a special program the Army had instituted because it was short of Aviators. The program called for retired aviators in Grades O4 and O5 to return to active duty (AD) to fill aviation desk jobs so the “youngsters” could return to the cockpit during the Global War on Terror.

The letter represented an opportunity for me to get into the fight against terrorism because I graduated from Flight School in 1974. Nine years later, Aviation Branch, which was established in 1983, invited me to join their ranks. At that time, I was a student at Ft Leavenworth attending the Command and General Staff College, and I turned them down to continue the rest of my career as an Infantryman.

Now, newly retired, I called the Aviation Branch and asked about this “return” program. They provided me with all the necessary information, and I applied to return to active duty as an Army Aviator. However, this was going to take some work because by 2001, I had already had my 20th knee surgery, including three knee replacements (the left one twice). Plus, I had had kidney stones several times. Both of those conditions are disqualifying for active duty.

Fortunately, I had another close friend, USMA '74 (also a member of my Sunday School Class), who was an active duty Flight Surgeon. He prepared a “Request for Waiver” for both the knee replacements and the kidney stones and sent them to Ft Rucker, and it was APPROVED!

One more hurdle waited for me. Even though my request for waiver had been approved, I still had to pass a flight physical. With great foresight, since retirement, I had been doing LOTS of bike riding to stay in shape. I commuted to/from work via bicycle since 1993, and the out-and-back commute was 54 miles per day for a few years! So, I was in better shape in 2001 than I had been since before Plebe Year! (Note: I had started doing the MS Biking Program and raising money to fight Multiple Sclerosis in the Summer of 1994, and I am getting ready for my 30th year as I write this).

After an extensive flight physical at Ft Belvoir and approval of the waiver from Ft Rucker, I was accepted for Return to Active Duty in May 2002. The Program was supposed to be for one year. However, my classmate, LTG Jim Lovelace, H-4, happened to be my senior rater, and asked if I could stay another year. Certainly, could not turn him down. I remained on Active Duty until 31 July 2004.

It was an honor to return to active duty, and no one had to throw me out a second time. Though the program by which I returned to active duty was for Aviators, the Army opened up other opportunities for other branches to return. When I was asked by a CGSC Classmate, “How did you get back in?” and told him my story, he contacted the Military Intelligence Branch and also returned to Active duty.

**Lesson Learned:** Though my approach will no longer work for Old Grads, there may come a time when the Army may need to consider bringing back to active duty, especially for critical needs, those who have departed the service, even those who have retired. I hope my experience may provide some insights on how you could make it work for you.

## **Taking a Reserve Training Division to War**

**Bruce Robinson E-1 29379**

Regarding donning two stars, I have been asked, how did you get here? In other words, by what miracle or mistake did the Army select me to be a general officer? Short answer — I do not know. But, I have heard that the selection process for brigadier general officer nominees is much like making sausage. It is an ugly process you don't want to witness, but the results are palatable. In June 2000, I was at the mandatory removal window of 30 years' service as a colonel when my "package" was favorably considered.

The submission package must be flawless, and the nominee is assigned to mull over it until it is perfect for submission to the selection board. In the Army Reserve, you apply for a promotion tied to manning a projected position vacancy. There are no at large promotions to establish a general officer pool.

In the Reserve you are your own personnel manager and must navigate the personnel system on your own to apply for assignments, schools, and promotions. Reservists must apply for and be evaluated by selection boards for assignments, schools and field grade and general officer promotions. Some become ineligible for retention due to apathy or ignorance such as not staying educationally qualified.

It is a "pull system" where he or she goes after what they want. It helps to have mentors to assist you on your journey. I was blessed to have ones who saw potential in me that I did not realize or was not interested in pursuing. Their approach was "Robinson just do it", which I considered an order. I was encouraged to take the challenging distant assignments, apply for schools, concentrate on professional development, have a balanced life, and drive on.

As a general officer nominee, Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, in 1999, introduced Army Transformation to move the legacy army into a modern adaptable army. Traditional thinkers could not fathom anything other than what they knew. That traditional leadership group tended to fight the last war and cloned leaders after themselves.

I was a newly pinned brigadier general assigned as the assistant Division Commander, 80<sup>th</sup> Division (Institutional Training) when the Army Reserve, responded to General Shinseki's directive and initiated its transformation initiative.

Training divisions were a post-World War II mobilization model designed for initial training of a massive number of individuals in the event of partial or full national mobilization. With US Army Reserve Centers scattered geographically around the country soldiers usually joined units near their home and were retrained to fit unit manning requirements. The end of the draft in January 1973 made that model not only obsolete but irrelevant.

Leaders from the training divisions gathered to study and draft proposals for restructuring their units to support the missions of the United States Army. After statistical analysis of future manpower and training needs of the Army, it was evident that there was too much structure and a radical reduction was necessary. So, after much infighting and parochialism the proposals for the retention and redesignation of training divisions took shape.

One such proposal was the creation of mobile training assets, capable of rapid worldwide deployment. The result was to shrink the 98<sup>th</sup> Division, the smallest training division, and restructure it as the mobile training division. As the 80<sup>th</sup> Division representative, I was relieved that my division was spared.

Then came 911, and the Global War on Terrorism, triggering revolutionary change in the Army.

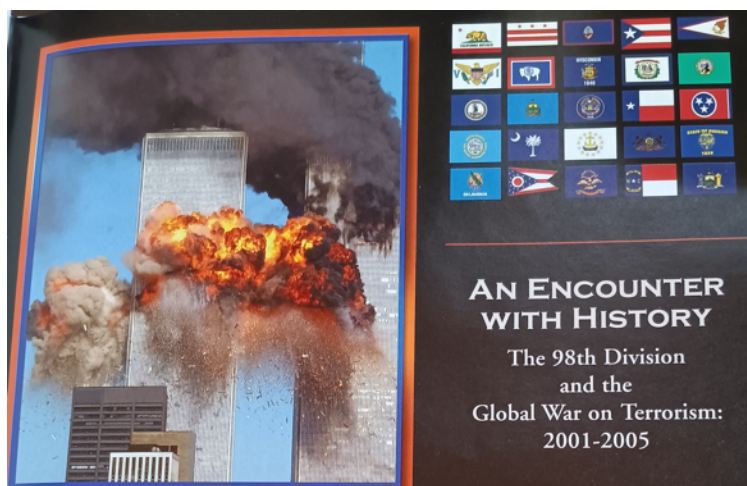


Photo from the 98<sup>th</sup> Division History Book

Then came Operation Iraqi Freedom, sucking most of the active and reserve components into the fight. It was anticipated that the DOD active components could handle the train up, in Iraq, of the to be created Iraqi Defense Force. However, the Operation went horribly off course overextending America's Armed Forces. All Regular Army units were committed to moving to the battlefield, fighting, or returning from battle; and not available for training Iraqi units.

So, after much consternation on the part of the Regular Army, the baton was passed to the Army Reserves to train the emerging Iraqi Army. Quickly, that mission baton reached the 98<sup>th</sup> Institutional Training Division. With no guidance from the Army or Reserve higher headquarters, we started with a blank sheet of paper.

Having recently assumed command of the 98<sup>th</sup>, I issued a division mobilization alert on 17 June 2004. It was an urgent, tedious and messy response which violated all mobilization protocol. I planned to put a brigade on the ground in Iraqi as our forward element headed by the Assistant Division Commander (ADC). He was an extraordinary planner with ties to the Pentagon and familiar with Department of the Army operations.

His job was to define and create an organizational structure and gain approval for the personnel requirements which would drive the timing and size of mobilization requirements. We assumed an estimated 800 soldiers would be needed with various skill. They would primarily be 98<sup>th</sup> Division soldiers supplemented by soldiers from other sources.

The ADC and a small cell deployed early to Iraqi to assess the situation. That action was fortuitously because the ADC found things in Iraq were changing rapidly. Our well-crafted plan was trashed because the 98<sup>th</sup> Division soldiers were to become fillers in a new organization that was being stood up in Iraq. This was no longer a 98<sup>th</sup> Division unit mission but an augmentation mission. Therefore, there was no need for a division headquarter in theater. Again, there was little guidance as to stateside training plans. So, we invented one.

However, my initial emergency actions, before the forward unit moved out, included short notice departure of dads and moms. That triggered strong resistance from soldiers, families, and employers. So, as my experts hammered out the details of our no-guidance plan and then our augmentation plan, I handled damage control from the fall out of reserve "weekend warriors," being sent off to war. That meant travelling because the 98<sup>th</sup> Division "Iroquois Warriors" were spread across eight states: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey.

My priority on those trips was meeting the stakeholder soldiers, civilians, and families to learn their difficulties. With my Division Command Sergeant Major in tow, we visited

all subordinate units and reserve centers and closely supervised the creation of the mobile training entity.



MG Robinson (lower left) Speaking at a Town Hall in West Hartford, CT Photo from the 98<sup>th</sup> Division History Book

But its task was not training U.S. young men and women for America’s Army; it was training a new foreign army. Thus, training techniques would be different overseas and our trainers would have to adapt accordingly. The problem was that there was no plan on how to do that.

So, we created the Foreign Army Training Assistance process and tweaked it along the way as new information and guidance became available. For example, the foreign army trainers of choice were toned down male Army Drill Sergeants. Males because Iraqi soldiers would not take training from a woman. The selection process began with brigade commanders screening and recommending the right guys for deployment.

Complicating our Division’s “go to Iraq” mission was that we were **not** relieved from our annual mission of providing basic training to new recruits at our Army Training Center. Thus, a significant staffing problem arose. We did not have enough drill sergeants to go to Iraq and conduct basic training that had been schedule a year in advance. Plus, graduating Army Reserve Drill Sergeants in the traditional fashion took a year and active-duty drill sergeant school slots were not available.

Given the importance of our dual missions and because time was of essence an untraditional method was needed to solve the training/staffing challenge. This is how we did it. After identifying every soldier in the Division that was eligible to become a drill

sergeant, we interviewed each one and invited them to become a drill sergeant via attending a rapid pace drill sergeant school. We would consolidate all authorized annual training days (39) plus special training days for a shortened, but still effective, drill sergeant school conducted at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia.

As an enticement to recruit volunteers, upon graduation the new Drill Sergeants would be integrated into our assigned state-side missions but would be exempt from weekend drills for a year. In other words, given the sacrifice of one long-term basic training mission they could have their weekends back. Not stopping at the edges of our unit, we enticed drill sergeants from other training divisions, who preferred one long-term stint of duty versus weekend drills, to join the 98<sup>th</sup> Division regardless of where they lived



Promotion Ceremony for SFC Ryan Crissy (center) Conducted by BG Bruce Robinson (left) and LTG Petraeus (right)

Some of my peers condemned the practice of enticing soldiers to join units outside of their geographical area. I ignored that whining because the nature of the Iroquois Warriors is to accomplish the mission regardless of obstacles and resources. That attitude and determination allowed elements of the 98<sup>th</sup> Division, augmented by soldiers from the inactive individual reserve, to mobilize and assemble at various Army installations from Fort Bliss, Texas to Camp Atterbury, Indiana for pre-theater training and then deploy to Iraq. Plus, creative creation of new Drill Sergeants allowed a small portion of the 98<sup>th</sup> to successfully conduct planned basic training of newly enlisted Reserve soldiers.



## **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** When large units are mobilized for an overseas mission, quickly get a "forward" team into the Theater. The sooner, the better. Their first task: discover the real conditions on the ground. This technique provides you more reaction time if the initial plan goes out the window and you have to build Plan B.

**LL #2:** A Reserve Division is spread across many states. To lead from the front, the Division Commander must first travel to the most important unit affecting the mobilization and then to the other units. Plus, negative family and employer reactions to a sudden mobilization can be mitigated by the families meeting with the Division Commander, who should assure them that he will "take care" of their trooper the best he can.

**LL #3:** When called upon, senior leaders not stuck in traditionalism are the agents of innovation who leverage the time and opportunity afforded them to better the Army.

**LL #4:** Change comes at a price, especially for traditionalists who can't recognize how to merge the merits of doing things the old way with some of the merits of the new way.

**LL #5:** A commander is vested with limited legal authority and unlimited persuasive authority. Sometimes the persuasive authority is highly effective.

**LL #6:** From my experience, drill sergeants are production assets help to craft new soldiers and are better used in that capacity than attending weekend drills.

**LL #7:** If you are in the Reserves or planning to join the Reserve Army, know that you must actively manage your career advancement, training, and positions you wish to serve in.

**LL #8:** Mentorship is essential in the Reserves to improve subordinate development.

**Category: Hurricane 2005**

## Hurricane Katrina Leadership

Michael Schneider C-4 29214

Like most of our classmates, I have been leading people and managing resources my whole life. Effective leaders strive for competence in their areas, learning constantly through formal education or experiences and helping those they lead become competent. Effective leaders need to care for those being led. If the leaders take care of those being led, they will take care of the leader. These principles carried me and my teams through good times and tough challenges.

For example, on 29 August 2005, when Hurricane Katrina plowed through Louisiana, I was the Director of the Staff Attorneys Office (SAO) for the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The office had 72 professionals, the second largest SAO in the nation.



New Orleans flooded and stranded

As Director, my office continued to provide our federal appeals judges superb legal services during the aftermath of the disruptive hurricane. Despite relocating the staff attorney office to Houston and working remotely, I instructed the office members to stay safe and get to work. In short, the mission was accomplished while everyone was cared for.

**Lesson Learned:** In summary, leadership gets the job done while making other teammates better.

## Chapter 5 — Active Duty Experiences



These lessons emerged while we were officers for a few years or for decades, fulfilling our oath to “. . . support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign or domestic . . .”

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### Category: High Performance

#### **Twelve Things I Should Have Been Taught**

**Charles (Chuck) McAteer G-4 29132**

I want to tell you what I wish I had been told before entering the Army as a new Second Lieutenant. These principles, values, skills, techniques, and ideas, learned along the way, guided me through the years, and I still use them in the private sector.

Although I was in the Infantry, what I say applies to any unit, team, or organization you command. (I sent a copy to a former USMA Superintendent, and he “loved it” His words, not mine).

#### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1** Your motto should be “Make it happen, never give up, one day at a time.” This will be important to you throughout your training and your career. You may not understand that now, but you will.

**LL #2** Focus combat power: If you are going Infantry, read General Erwin Rommel’s diary from WW I: *Infantry Attacks*. Memorize it (I am very serious). Read how he focuses his combat power at the critical points and how he uses his non-commissioned officers.

**LL #3** Use Surprise and Maneuver: If you are going to combat arms, combat support, or combat service support, you need to read General Erwin Rommel’s diary from WW II. Military historians agree he was the best commander on both sides in WW II. He captured a British Army in North Africa while outnumbered 3 to 1. Read how he used surprise and maneuver to make the most of his combat power and minimize unit casualties. The fact that the German Africa Corps had the lowest number of casualties of any unit in WW II and always fought outnumbered says it all. The fact that he led the resupply for one of his units one night will tell you the importance he gave to logistics.

**LL #4** Use steel instead of blood. It is much easier to rebuild a building than to write a letter home to a dead soldier’s family. What would you say? “Your son died, but we spared the building?” Think about it.

**LL #5** Stay on the attack. Try never to let your soldiers become targets. That was what made the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan so hard. Stay on the offensive.

**LL #6** Set the unit’s attitude: The attitude and morale of your soldiers are critical to the success of your unit. Tell your soldiers, “We are going Old Testament on the enemy.” They will know precisely what you mean. As much as they would like to think about wives,

girlfriends, and family, they must stay focused. They must think of nothing but their jobs during the mission. You stay focused as well.

**LL #7** Design to execute: Demand high standards if you want a great unit/platoon. If you want a legendary unit, have a great system, a great plan, and perfect execution.

**Build** a system for everything where every soldier knows his job, the job of his next higher, and the soldier to his left and right. Include a playbook so that every soldier knows exactly what they are supposed to do for every mission: movement to contact, attack (day/night), etc., like a football team.

**Plan** how to react when the enemy does something unexpected, by playing “what if” with your whole platoon and then call audibles if you need to change the play. Such planning goes for combat support and service support units as well.

**Practice** each mission intensely until your soldiers can do it in their sleep (literally, and I mean it). First practice with no ammo, then blank ammo, then live ammo. Build it, train it, lead it.

**Out-think** the enemy; always use surprise (to reduce your casualties). Attack him when and where he least expects it.

**Distract** the enemy away from your point of attack. And execute flawlessly: first in training, then in combat. Legendary units have a great system, a great plan, and perfect execution. They bend the enemy to their will.

**LL #8** Develop better NCOs: Great units have great lieutenants and great NCOs. A legendary unit has a legendary lieutenant and legendary NCOs. Ensure that your NCOs understand the vision for your unit: what you want it to look like, to be like, and to act like. They must share your vision. They must know your standards: no compromise. The underachievers will want to leave; help them to do that. The rest will become better NCOs, then become great NCOs, and they may even become legendary NCOs. You are building a high-performance team, whether it is a combat, combat support, or combat service support team.

**LL #9** Be an expert: As the platoon leader, learn everything about the platoon. Be the one that your NCOs come to when they have a question. Have the answers. Be an expert on every weapon and every piece of equipment. Study the field manuals. Study the Training and Evaluation Tests (we called them ARTEPs). What are the graders looking for, and most importantly, why? Practice to max the test. And I mean practice. There was a legendary platoon leader in WW I who did all of the above. By wars end, he commanded a seven-company infantry battalion as a Major. His name was Lieutenant Erwin Rommel.

**LL #10** Marksmanship: if every soldier in your unit can fire expert with every weapon, you will have a deadly unit. For the Infantry, that is a unit of trained killers. There is no other way to put it. That is what they are and must be. They must master every weapon and be familiar with the enemies, in case they run out of ammo. Their weapons are their tools. When they cross the line of departure, they are going to work.

**LL #11** Reconnaissance: Always know the terrain for your mission. Recon it yourself if you can, or have your best NCOs do it and brief you when they return. Memorize it. Use a drone if you can. Gen Omar Bradley tried to send his Army through the Hurtgen Forest because it looked like a good avenue of attack on the map. He never saw it on the ground. The trees were five feet apart — a senseless loss of precious soldiers.

**LL #12** Smart time usage: If you ever get in charge of this Army, build an Army ready for combat. If your soldiers aren't training, they should have time off with family. Eliminate the non-essential requirements on your unit's time that will be worthless in combat. You will understand exactly what I mean. Every hour and every dollar should be focused on combat training for combat or unit and family morale. Many of your soldiers may only be in the Army for a few years. They should always be able to look back on it as being a member of a high-performance team. Or even a legendary one.

### **Postscript**

God bless you and keep you always. Be a rock of determination and faith — determined to succeed with faith that God will help you. You control what you can, and let God control what you can't.

### **Most valuable lesson from *The Art of War***

**Steven Wilson I-3 28809**

In any situation, first, decide how much time is available. During the available time, evaluate as many courses of action as possible. When time expires, select the course of action that provides the greatest opportunity for success. Execute it boldly and audaciously. If there is no best course of action when time expires, select one course of action and execute it.

### **Better Focus**

**James (Jim) Haas B-3 29485**

In 1974, it was a post-Vietnam critical time in the Army, especially for our soldiers. It was also a time of transition for me as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 501<sup>st</sup> Infantry (Geronimo) at Fort Campbell, KY. That year I transitioned from being the Battalion S-4 Supply Officer into the Headquarters Company Commander.

Troop morale was not high. Many of my soldiers were “short-timers” waiting to be released from the service. In parallel, there was an active program to expedite discharges for undesirables.

One morning, my First Sergeant brought two such characters into the orderly room. They were within ten days of being removed from the Army with a General Discharge (Not Honorable) for bad behavior inside and outside the Army.

On base, they were repeatedly late to formation, not showing up, AWOL, suspected of taking property from other soldiers in the barracks, using drugs in the barracks, and failing to obey orders. They had also robbed a tire store in the nearby town of Clarksville, and had an upcoming date with the Clarksville Police.

“Sir, we need to hit these two with the maximum in an Article 15. Take ALL of their pay, restrict them to barracks under guard, bust them in rank, whatever we can do. I

recommend we march them to confinement in the barracks in front of the entire company during morning formation. We'll send them with an E-5 guard carrying a big stick.”

Now, I knew better not to ignore the advice of a First Sergeant who had been a senior NCO longer than I'd been in the Army! But I did ask him, “How is that going to change these two? They're going to the Clarksville Police in a few days, they were already busted to E-1, had max fines and pay forfeiture, and are getting a General Discharge so they forfeited some veteran benefits. So, there was nothing else to take. Good riddance in a few days, right?”



Half Full or Half Empty?

Here's the wisdom my First Sergeant offered. “Sir, what you say is true. I understand your point. We will never reform these two. And I want them gone from our Army just as much as you do. But, look at this another way. We have 155 other men in this company that occasionally need to be reminded why THEY obey the rules, why THEY show up on time, why THEY keep drugs out of the barracks, and why THEY are good soldiers.”

**Lesson Learned:** That was world class advice that is applicable to every organization, not just the Army. It was world class because while I focused on the undesirables, my First Sergeant focused on the desirables. Initially, I wanted to add my two cents worth and make it even better advice, but then I realized it's perfect, exactly as the First Sergeant stated it.



## Define the Problem

Gilbert (Gil) Harper D-3 29104

The first step of the Army problem-solving process is “Define the Problem.” Defining the problem and staying focused on the problem are two different challenges.

Our unit was tasked with supporting the Special Olympics at Fort Lewis, Washington. Several hundred disabled athletes would stay in military billets during the competition, and we had to be ready to respond to emergencies. Therefore, I asked the officer-in-charge, a very talented captain, to ensure we had communication in each building. The captain returned the next day to say that he had contacted the Signal Brigade on post, and they would schedule a training exercise during the competition in the barracks area so we would have radio communications 24 hours a day. However, we would have to pay for the fuel to power their generators from our training funds.

I asked the captain to define the problem, and he responded that he needed \$5,000 to pay for the fuel. Again, I asked him to define the problem. This went on several times while, the captain became increasingly frustrated with my inability to understand. Finally, he blurted out, “Sir – you told me to get communications in those buildings.” At that point, he realized that he had **improperly** redefined the problem from “ensuring we had communications” to “finding \$5,000.”

I asked him if he had visited the barracks, and he admitted that he had not but would do so immediately. Two hours later, he sheepishly reported that each building had a working telephone.

Not staying focused on the problem is another way to waste time, effort, and impact.

One of my duties as an installation commander at Fort Eustis in 1997 was to submit a consolidated readiness report (USR) each month for all units on post. After one such meeting, one of my senior subordinates received an anonymous letter from a junior officer accusing me of falsely making the report more favorable. That was not true, but trust is essential in military relationships, and this officer, and perhaps others, did not trust me.

I had a dilemma. The officer expressed an opinion, and I was glad to know it, even if I disagreed. If I had a problem within the command, I wanted to know about it. Therefore, I didn’t want to do anything that would be perceived as attempting to punish the accuser. So, I decided to have one officer from each company on post attend an officer’s call where I would show them the report and correct any notion that I had falsified it. It would also allow me an opportunity to stress the importance of mutual trust in accomplishing our

mission. The attending officers would then be tasked to brief their units. At this point, I would grade myself an “A.”

To be effective, the officer call would have to be conducted quickly so training schedules and other meetings would not be interrupted. A sufficiently large room would have to be found and reserved – possibly interrupting other scheduled events. A last-minute officer’s call of this magnitude would be difficult but not overwhelming.

However, this is when the tyranny of the inbox diverted me from an A-Task (restoring trust) and focused my attention on the B & C tasks of answering emails and routine administration. That led me not to hold the officer call. That was an opportunity lost.

**Lesson Learned:** Stay focused on the A-tasks or, as a boss of mine put it, “If something slips off your dinner plate, make sure it’s the vegetables and not the meat.”

### Who Did Nothing?

Mark Barbour B-3 28876

Things go wrong despite careful planning and best efforts. It may be that ill luck and outside forces conspire against success. Sometimes, success lies outside our grasp, no matter how hard we try.

But often, success would have been ours if the effort had been more substantial or timely. Sometimes, the planning needed to be more careful, and the efforts required to be stronger.

When the boss sees that things have gone wrong, a natural question is, “who screwed up?” This is the question you ask when standing in the broken glass. It is the question you ask your subordinates when trying to get their wrecked train back on track.

But when stress hits the fan, remember that the person in the middle of it is doing something. It probably is not the smartest or best thing, but that person stood up and pitched in. Correct them, yes. Instruct them, yes. But do not lose sight that the person may have stepped into the breach when others did not.

The teammate who needs correction the most is the person who did not step forward. You want people to do the right thing and should identify and reward those who do. You want people to avoid making mistakes, and you identify, correct, and instruct so errors do not recur.

But you absolutely do not want people standing around doing nothing. Avoiding getting involved in challenging situations to avert the possible taint of personal disgrace is a moral failure. Such avoidance behavior needs to be treated as letting the team down.

Meanwhile, team members who step up but fall short should be valued and admired far more than the shirker with hands in his pockets.

Hospitals have long practiced tracking physician performance with statistics on their success rates in curing patients. Unfortunately, over time, hospitals have found that this tracking practice incentivizes doctors to avoid tough cases. Some doctors avoid failure by shunning the tough challenges and staying on the easy path. Rewards to doctors with these misleading stats achieve a perverse result. Patients needing treatment are avoided by doctors who do not want bad stats.

**Lesson Learned:** Here is the hard takeaway. Don't just look at the problem in front of you. Also, look for who is not there. Part of dealing with the aftermath of any failure or poor performance needs to be an awareness not just of "who took action and did it right?" and "who took action and did it wrong?" You must also ask, "Who did nothing but could have helped?"

## **Audacious Leadership**

**Paul J. Fardink C-2 29461**

In 1977, I was a Captain assigned as the Operations Officer for the 121st Aviation Company (Soc Trang Tigers) at Fort Benning, Georgia. We were Fort Benning's only helicopter lift company and supported the Infantry Center and School.

The 121st had approximately forty assigned Aviation Warrant Officers and six Commissioned Officers who were Army Aviators. One day, a group of Senior Warrant Officer Instructor Pilots representing Worldwide Standards arrived from Fort Rucker, Alabama. Their job was to give check rides to selected 121st pilots to ensure training and standardization standards were being met.

Typically, unit pilots did not look forward to taking one of these check rides. A potential failure could result in grounding and was not career-enhancing! Some pilots would try to avoid a check ride by any means possible, but not Captain James P. Sullivan!

As the check pilots were looking at a list of aviators assigned to the 121st to determine candidates for an evaluation flight, the door to my office suddenly flew open, and in walks Captain Sullivan, "Who the hell do I have to see to take a check ride?"

The Worldwide Standards check pilots were wide-eyed in amazement. No one ever volunteers for one of their check rides, but there stood a commissioned officer ready to go!

Captain Sullivan took the check ride, and during the evaluation flight, an actual in-flight emergency occurred when the Instructor Pilot flipped a switch to turn off the hydraulics of the flight controls. Unfortunately, an irreversible valve failed, causing a cyclic “hard over” and slammed the cyclic control to the extreme right rear. Sullivan and the Instructor handled the emergency and completed the flight with professionalism.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** There is no substitute for audacious, fearless leadership, setting an example for others to follow. James Sullivan is a classmate and one of the best Army Aviators I have had the privilege of flying with. Today, in 2024, he is our class president, and he has not slowed down one bit.

**LL #2:** It is wise to remember the difference between audaciousness and bravado. Audaciousness means confidently facing a more dangerous challenge that others would rarely attempt by taking action based on past experience with a similar task. Bravado is daring fate with cocky overconfidence while not having experience overcoming a similar challenge and while not recognizing or preparing for likely major risks.

### **Safety, Sir**

#### **David Varnell F-3 29326**

As a first lieutenant platoon leader in Germany in 1972, I was the firing range safety officer during our annual training at Grafenwoehr. Our battalion commander was afraid of being embarrassed by his junior officers, especially when VIPs visited our ranges.

So, I was not surprised to see my battalion commander’s shock when I saluted the visiting V Corps Commander, who said that if he wanted to come any closer, he would need to wear his helmet. The three-star general returned to his jeep, retrieved his cover, and then walked the firing line with me.

Later, as expected, the battalion commander reprimanded me harshly for my action, pointing out that first lieutenants do not give generals orders. He asked me what made me so bold to tell the general what to do.

I responded that since I was the safety officer, I was responsible for ensuring that all safety rules were observed. I calmly added that all individuals on the firing line must wear a helmet regardless of rank. I asked him how it would look to the enlisted men if I showed favoritism to a high-ranking officer, adding that I felt that we, as officers, should set the example.

**Lessons Learned:** Safety applies to all people on a range, regardless of rank. You must do your duty as required, irrespective of the consequences. Also, a leader must lead by example and never ask those you lead to do something you are unwilling to do yourself. Actually, I helped the general do that.

### **Postscript**

Three months later, the battalion commander made me a company commander.

### **Lead by Example**

**Paul Passaro F-2 29133**

If it's a task good enough for you, then it is good enough for your soldiers. And vice-versa. In other words, don't be in the mess hall during physical training!

### **Really? . . . Dead Last**

**John Vermillion C-2 29446**

In 1976, I'd had a tour as an infantry platoon leader in the 196th Light Infantry in Vietnam and commanded my first company in CONUS. So, an assignment in the 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea looked good to me. I requested it and got it.

When I assumed command in the Republic of Korea of my second infantry company, I discovered I was doing it smack dab in the middle of outgoing and incoming battalion commanders. The day I took the guidon, the two battalion commanders were still heavily involved in all the tasks involved in their change of command.

At the same time, several people in the Division reminded me that I was about to command the company that received the lowest numerical rating of all 64 company-sized units during the last Annual General Inspection (AGI). My Battling Bastards were dirt in the eyes of nearly everyone. Plus, I had less than one week after taking over to ready Bravo Company for the coming inspection.

With my higher-ups focused elsewhere, I decided how to turn Bravo around. It entailed violating almost every rule of leadership taught in the schools. But, I didn't have time for niceties, so I ignored that important rule about strict adherence to the chain of command.

Then, I had my people procure every chalkboard and piece of chalk that wasn't tied down. My office became the inspection command post. Regardless of rank, every man jack assumed responsibility for some segment of the inspection. On the chalkboard, I had matrices showing the inspection point, the governing manual or regulation, and the person responsible. The duty day became 24 hours. Every man reported to me to explain what he had to do and a projected completion time. Some men had never even heard of the subject for which they suddenly had jurisdiction. As they made progress, they indicated it on the board. Only the individual responsible had authorization to fill in the lines next to his name.

Handling this AGI challenge might have been the most fun I ever had. Privates reported directly to me, and most were extremely proud of their contribution to the company. This was in the post-Vietnam time when it was common to have a number of young soldiers who hadn't gone beyond grades 8 or 9. I was prouder of them than they were of themselves. If any Lieutenants or Senior NCOs found my approach belittling, they didn't show it.

When the numerous AIG inspectors flooded our company area, they shook their heads at the turnaround. I can't recall exactly how long it took, but I think it was most of a week. In the end, Bravo Company went from dead last to first.

We've heard the adage that the best way to take responsibility for any group of men is under stressful conditions. My first week of command was such a time.

**Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ From that point on, after re-instilling pride in the unit, those wonderful soldiers poured their guts out on every mission.
- ✓ There indeed is a time to return to first principles, to forget about cookie-cutter solutions, and do whatever's necessary, and legal, to get the job done.

**Breaking Eggs To Succeed**

**John Connors A-2 28994**

After my time as a cadet, officer in the U.S. Army, and lawyer in the corporate legal and banking world, there are many experiences from which I've taken a number of lessons.

However, the one that has had the most lasting impact on me arose early in my Army career.

My learning began after just six months as an armored cavalry platoon leader in the divisional cavalry squadron and little more than two years out of West Point. Surprisingly, I was reassigned to take over a company in a neighboring tank battalion where the prior company commander had just been relieved by the battalion commander for the company's poor performance. I was taking command of a company where only four of sixteen tanks were operationally ready.

I arrived for my first meeting with my new battalion commander, who had recently come from command of a cavalry squadron in Vietnam. In his first three months, he put his imprint on the battalion by relieving three of his company commanders (including the company I would take over). After reviewing all of the problems of my new command and his evaluation of my company's leadership, he made two points clear to me:

First, he would support me in removing any member of my leadership team, provided I wrote the efficiency report supporting the individual's removal.

Second, I had four months to straighten out the company, or I would end up like the prior commander – relieved from command.

After making my own assessment of my new leadership team, I removed my first sergeant, motor sergeant, and one of my platoon leaders. I elevated one of my platoon sergeants to first sergeant, another as the new motor sergeant, and a platoon leader to replace the executive officer (XO), who was rotating out of Germany.

Once the new leadership team was in place, we sat down to discuss how we would deal with the poor operational readiness of the company. My new motor sergeant informed me of a policy in U.S. Army Europe that once a tank attained 5,000 miles, it could be turned in for rebuild and refurbishment, and a newly rebuilt and refurbished tank would be delivered in its place.

I instructed the first sergeant to survey the mileage of each of our tanks. Unfortunately, none of them, especially the non-operational ones, were close to the 5,000-mile exchange threshold for a newly rebuilt one. After considering several options, including driving the tanks around the training area in shifts until they reached the 5,000-mile threshold (a plan that had no chance of working), we came up with the idea of artificially running up the mileage on the odometer to achieve the turn in threshold. Understanding that this would be highly irregular and improper (not to mention we would have to amend the log books to reflect the additional mileage), I decided to go ahead and have the motor sergeant implement this plan on the worst three tanks in the company.

Tanks that we had little chance of bringing up to operational standards in the near term by following the usual requisition and repair procedures.



photo courtesy of defense.gov

After a few months of using the new plan, we were ready to turn in our first tank for rebuild. After completing and submitting all of the necessary paperwork, one day, a flatbed truck pulled into our motor pool bearing a newly rebuilt and refurbished M-60A1 tank for exchange for our over-5000-miles-tank. The impact on the morale of the tank crew receiving the new vehicle was dramatic, coursing through the rest of the company.

A few months after we turned in the first tank for rebuild, I received a “report of survey” for thousands of dollars for “missing parts” on the tank we loaded on the flatbed truck. I responded, ‘It was complete when it left our motor pool’. We never heard anything again.

Meanwhile, my fellow tank company commanders were puzzled by how we were able to engineer the exchange. And I suspected that my battalion commander knew what we were doing but didn’t say anything, given his admonition that I get the company turned around and operationally ready in four months. After two more tank exchanges, our operational readiness was clearly on the upswing. The result: at the next annual tank gunnery qualification, we finished as the second-highest company in the 8<sup>th</sup> Division.

**Lesson Learned:** The battalion commander handed me a company that was not operationally effective, jeopardizing the battalion’s ability to accomplish its mission if the balloon went up. That was more important than correcting poor maintenance procedures within my new command. My new leadership team needed to quickly move us to a



combat-effective level. We did that by disregarding slow SOP maintenance procedures and bending the rules.

Sometimes, you cannot accomplish your primary mission or achieve an important positive outcome without sometimes using unorthodox (or improper) means. More colloquially, you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.

### **Preparation Pays Off**

**Edwin K (EK) Smith H-1 28846**

Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse again. When you have backups to the backups, things are going better than before.

### **Eating Crow, Sucks**

**Paul J. Fardink C-2 29461 &**

**Thomas Maertens H-3 29209**

In 1984, I was a Major assigned to the Applied Aviation Technology Directorate (AATD) at Fort Eustis, Virginia. AATD had its own aircraft, and as an Army Aviator, I flew support missions for various research and development test activities. I also flew missions in support of Fort Eustis and the Transportation School and Center.

One day, the operations officer for Felker Army Airfield at Fort Eustis called me and asked me to accept what he felt was a priority mission. The CIA Training Camp had requested an Army helicopter (UH-1H) for a mission they had planned. As the designated Pilot in Command, I called a classmate, Major Thomas Maertens, who was assigned to the Transportation School, to be my copilot. I kidded him about the fact that they had called me for this mission and not him.

As we approached the training camp, we noticed that the helipad was marked with the standard "H," but this one had a big black "X" superimposed over it to warn pilots not to land there. I told Tom that we had permission and proceeded to land the helicopter.

We were immediately met by a smiling senior official who stated, "You two are just in time for lunch. Please join us in the dining facility."

When we entered the dining facility, forty to fifty young, clean-cut recruits immediately stopped eating and talking. They were wide-eyed in amazement and stared at us. Obviously, they had yet to see many Army Aviators in Nomex flight suits.

Tom and I sat down at a table and things started to return to normal when a couple young men came over to ask what we were all about. When they learned that Major Tom Maertens was a Vietnam War veteran and had served as a Cobra gunship pilot, he became an instant celebrity! A crowd of admirers converged on him. Like iron shavings jumping to a magnet, the CIA candidates swept past me and focused on Tom, the hero gunship pilot.

After we completed the mission and sat in the helicopter preparing for departure, Tom turned to me with a huge grin. “Hey, I know you were the pilot in command, but stick with me, buddy; I’m glad to help you out!”

**Lesson Learned:** I learned how quickly people can teach you that you are far less important than you think you are. I learned humility from that experience. And later, when I would hear that another CIA operative had lost his life, I would wonder if it was one of those great young men who, on that day, held two Army Aviators in high regard.

## Category: Training In South Korea

### Hole . . . What Hole?

David White C-4 29200

During the annual Joint Team Spirit Exercise in South Korea in 1986, as Forward Area Support Coordinator (FASCO) for the division’s armored brigade, I observed two incidents involving Armored Vehicle Launched Bridges (AVLBs). An AVLB is a portable bridge that can be deployed quickly across and open gaps up to roughly 60 feet and support a vehicle of approximately 60 tons. It is transported on a tank chassis with the turret removed and special hydraulic equipment installed to launch and recover the bridge. The scissor-type bridge folds on top of the tank chassis for transport. During transport, the vehicle is nearly thirteen feet tall.



Road Ready M60A1 AVLB

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was conducting river crossing operations over the Han River, south of Seoul. A site had been established to ferry vehicles and troops across the Han from the north to the south side of the river. The ferry site was on a small island in the river, and to get onto the island, two land bridges had been constructed, which permitted vehicles to drive through shallow water onto the island. Those were the only two places vehicles could cross without going into deep water.

Late one morning, I drove past the ferry operation, heading north toward my unit. Farther along, an AVLB passed me, heading south toward the ferry site. A short time later, I drove back toward the ferry site. There, I saw a soldier waving frantically, standing on what appeared to be the top section of AVLB bridging, floating on the water between the north bank and the island. Unseen, the bottom section of the bridge and the vehicle chassis were completely underwater.

Apparently, the driver had not wanted to wait in line with the other vehicles and believed his AVLB could negotiate the shallow 30-to-40-foot gap between the bank and the island. He quickly learned he was wrong, as the AVLB sank in approximately 10 feet of water. Fortunately, the crew evacuated the vehicle unhurt.

The second incident occurred in the afternoon that day, not far from the ferry site. I overheard radio traffic indicating another AVLB was in trouble nearby. When I arrived at the site, an AVLB was on its side in a rice paddy. The bridge was perpendicular to the ground with the tank chassis still attached. The AVLB driver had tried to take a shortcut across the rice paddy using the dike that separated two paddies. The AVLB had only driven a short distance when one side of the dike failed, toppling the AVLB into the paddy.

Both recovery operations were unique and required creative improvisation by good recovery teams and significant time to recover the two vehicles.

**Lesson Learned:** A shortcut may not always be a good idea without prior reconnaissance and assessment. It's better to walk any unknown portion of a route rather than wasting hours to correct an avoidable error.

## **Helicopter Down**

**Tom (Roz) Rozman A-3 29484 &  
Robert Ginn A-3 29270**

The following experience was jointly experienced early in the careers of Tom Rozman and Bob Ginn. They were first lieutenants assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea in the summer-fall period of 1973.

Tom, after serving as a rifle platoon leader in the 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry, was assigned as aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Thomas U. Greer, Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver (ADC(M)). Meanwhile, Bob, was a UH-1H and Cobra pilot, assigned Platoon Leader, Cobra Platoon, 2nd Aviation Battalion.

Major General Henry Emerson was the division commander. Shortly after becoming his Aide, I observed him assess his command's go-to-war mission, limited maneuver and fires capabilities, and the rugged compartmented terrain. That led him to implement an aggressive program to use the division's aviation assets to enhance the division's ability to concentrate its maneuver and fires assets more effectively and rapidly. The effort was not without travail, and his leadership approach was instructive.

Though designated as an infantry division, the 2<sup>nd</sup> was a hybrid organization, not quite straight-leg infantry, mechanized, or armor.

Our Mech-heavy brigade included two mechanized battalions but was missing a third maneuver battalion. The Tank-heavy brigade consisted of two tank battalions and an infantry battalion. The remaining brigade had three foot-soldier infantry battalions.

To compensate for the missing maneuver battalion, MG Emerson placed the division's armored cavalry squadron into the Mech heavy brigade.

The positioning of the brigades and division support was as follows. Facing north on the division's left flank, the Mech-heavy brigade occupied a north-south running valley with steep medium-altitude mountain ranges as the valley rims.

As the division's right flank, the Tank-heavy brigade with its infantry battalion was positioned in the vicinity of a major town, also in a parallel north-south running valley.

Positioned about a mile forward of the Tank-heavy Brigade was the division's combat engineer battalion.

About a mile south of the Tank-heavy brigade, leading elements of the Infantry Brigade took up position.

Division artillery battalions were distributed in support of this initial two-brigades-up and one-back positioning. Additional Corps artillery was arranged to reinforce these fires.

The nature of the terrain presented some defensive advantages to the infantry battalions and their fire support. The main ridges and smaller tributary ridges provided ample positions from which the valley floors could be dominated by observation and fires.

However, the limited number of maneuver battalions, even employing the engineer battalion, combined with the base mobility of the four infantry battalions, restricted timely flexibility by the division commander to shift battalions against a fluid, numerically superior opposing force situation.

The division commander needed some capability that would allow him the ability to leverage his limited forces to optimize the terrain to neutralize a numerically superior attacking force.

Luckily, ADC(M) Greer had experienced combat in the same valleys 20 years earlier as a young infantry officer. He had first-hand experience with infantry combat, mobility challenges, and fire support or lack thereof in Korea's rugged terrain. He also had combat experience at the brigade command level and assistant division command level in Vietnam's broken terrain theater. In the war, he also gained experience in the effective use of the developing application of another means of tactical mobility for maneuver and support forces—the helicopter.



Flight of UH-1 Huey Helicopters

On assessing the available combat assets in the division and the likely developments a fluid operational situation would entail, the division commander determined that he must maximize his limited maneuver and fire assets. He quickly determined that the lever of advantage was his divisional aviation battalion assets, supplemented where possible by other helicopter assets in-country. He promptly embarked on an aggressive movement training program for the Division's maneuver and ground and aerial fire-power units.

These innovations took the form of tactical exercises that used division helicopters to neutralize the effects of the rugged terrain on by concentrating and dispersing forces and fires quickly and flexibly against likely future tactical scenarios.

He did not shrink from performing these operations at night. Though aviation night vision capabilities were improving, they were still far from today's standards, and night vision goggles were **not yet available** to the flight crews. Safety was given full attention, but the inherent operational aviation risks versus mission needs meant some would be present during all operations.

ADC(M) Greer determined that proper planning and attention to detail for safety and maintenance would mitigate those risks. Plus, the ultimate tactical benefit during future potential operations would be a lifesaving combat multiplier.

Thus began an aggressive program of tactical maneuver using aviation assets to enhance the agility and mobility of the four infantry battalions and their fire support. The goal was to turn the rugged terrain into an advantage using aviation in direct support. This included enhancement of maneuver planning and concentration by moving firing batteries by air as well as optimizing gunship employment in the broken and mountainous terrain.

As the work progressed well over several weeks the division team added to its abilities in employing aviation as a mobility and fires multiplier to great effect. After daytime proficiency increased, the division commander decided it was time to develop night operations capability. Division, brigade, and battalion operations staff shifted their planning and training focus to night movement, maneuver, and support.

A battalion-level tactical air movement was scheduled to occur early in this night operations cycle. Infantry would be moved from a thousand-foot-high ridgeline to another of similar height across the valley about 3-4 kilometers wide. There was no moon that night. The exercise got underway about 2100 hours one night at the end of summer.

As the operation unfolded, ADC(M) Greer positioned his aircraft at about 8,000 feet altitude to observe the movement of the UH-1H formations as they loaded infantry at the pick-up zone (PZ) ridge and discharged them at the designated landing zone (LZ) ridge across the valley. All that was visible to track movement were the aviation lights supplemented by radio traffic on the command net.

Initial iterations of the ridgeline-to-ridgeline movement had deployed about 1/3 of the battalion from the PZ to the LZ when a flash and subsequent radio traffic at the LZ indicated that a UH1H had gone down. The command aircraft immediately descended to a landing site where the ADC(M) Greer's jeep was waiting. He moved directly to the LZ.

On arrival, enough light was now available on the ridge top to gain a preliminary idea of what had happened. The aft section of the UH-1H lay on the ground on the reverse slope while the transmission had ripped through the forward section of the aircraft, shredding much the fuselage. The UH-1Hs had been flying in flights of 3, loose "V" in and out of the PZ and LZ. As one flight descended into the LZ in the dark, they did not see a burial mound that stuck up above the surrounding ridge. The right-side helicopter's skids cut into the mound at 60 knots. The sudden resistance held the airframe, which was not strong enough to prevent the transmission and its momentum from ripping forward through the aircraft.

Miraculously, the crew survived, although the pilot was hit in the back of his helmet by the transmission as it exited the aircraft and suffered considerable injury to his skull. The pilot, co-pilot, and crew chief were medevaced from the scene, and the remains of the aircraft were sent back to the battalion's airbase.

As for all such incidents, an investigation followed, producing findings and recommendations. Injured aircraft crew were given the best available medical care in-country and support by their unit.

That said, the incident did not stop the division commander's training initiative. However, safety planning, already heavily emphasized, received redoubled focus. Subsequently, the training produced a significant increase in the division's readiness and capability to confront its difficult mission.

**Lessons Learned:** From a leadership perspective at the level of a combat division, two observations seem of particular relevance.

- ✓ The new division commander demonstrated a capacity for innovation with a clear vision of how he intended to perform the Division's maneuver mission in an environment that, at first blush, did not seem to support his vision. Importantly, he was highly effective in communicating this vision and engaging his leadership team to realize the vision.

- ✓ The division commander demonstrated a resolute approach to pursuing goals that listened to new input but would not retreat from pursuing change and innovation, even in the face of setbacks.

### **Postscript**

The program of innovation continued to notable success. But of greater impact was the impression made on more junior leaders in the leadership team by the example of the division commander. Many of these rising leaders would apply what they had experienced and learned in South Korea during later assignments. The Army benefitted greatly from this transfer of approach and experience.

### **Attack From the River**

**David White C-4 29200**

As anyone who has been to South Korea knows, the terrain, unlike in Europe, is not conducive to armored vehicle operations. Armored vehicles are frequently restricted to roads for their movements.

In 1986 as a senior Major, I was the battalion executive officer for the 702nd Maintenance Battalion in the 2nd Infantry Division Support Command (DISCOM), serving in the extra duty role as the Forward Area Support Coordinator (FASCO) supporting the Division's armor brigade. In that capacity, I observed and worked with Lieutenant Colonel Jim Quinlan, who commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 72<sup>nd</sup> Armor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, Camp Casey, South Korea. He gave the battalion its name, the "Firebreathers."

During the 1986 Joint Team Spirit Exercise, to demonstrate the United States' resolve to defend South Korea from North Korean aggression, the 2/72 Armor opposed forces that had recently arrived from the United States. Both opposing forces operated using the same maps.

Those maps showed the streams and rivers as water obstacles. Because it was the dry season, most of the smaller rivers and streams had dried up, leaving dry riverbeds where large volumes of water would flow during the monsoon season. Those forces from the States were not aware of the condition of the rivers and streams as potential roadways.





South Korean Valley River – courtesy of Wikipedia

When the forces from the States established sound defensive positions facing north to halt the attacks of our 2ID forces, LTC Quinlan developed an innovative plan of attack. His battalion attacked through the riverbeds and fell on the forces opposing him from their rear. Thinking the rivers and streams were obstacles, those forces without sufficient knowledge of the terrain and conditions had not considered the riverbeds as an avenue of advance and were completely surprised.

**Lesson Learned:** A thorough evaluation of the local terrain and conditions is essential to developing a successful offensive or defensive plan. In this case, the armor offensive force developed and executed a successful plan, while the defensive forces did not.

### **Monsoons in Korea**

**David White C-4 29200**

The Army has over 69 years of experience in Korea, but it is not 69 years of cumulative knowledge. It is one year's experience repeated 69 times. Each officer, NCO, and soldier rotates to Korea for one year to learn valuable lessons, and then they leave and are replaced by a person who must again learn the same lessons the soldiers learned the previous year.

One example of a lesson that must be learned is how to conduct operations during the monsoon season in Korea. There is no way to adequately describe, to someone who

has not experienced it, the awesome power of moving water during the Korean monsoons. When I arrived at Camp Casey, near Dongducheon, in May 1985, I noticed large concrete gutters the size of canals running throughout the camp. Some were large enough to drive large trucks abreast through them. When I asked what the empty gutter/canals were for, I was told, “Just wait until monsoon season, and you will understand.”

We did not yet have support battalions designated for each brigade during that army period. Instead, we used temporary, provisional organizations to support brigades in the field. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division’s armored brigade conducted field training, as a senior major, I was the Forward Area Support Coordinator (FASCO), and I performed as a support battalion commander. In that role, I coordinated all logistical support for the armored brigade. The support battalion consisted of a ground maintenance company, a medical company, and a supply and transportation company. Many leaders in this provisional battalion, including myself, had no prior experience in Korea during monsoon season.

Anyone in the Army who has been to Korea knows the rugged and challenging terrain, including the Han River that runs through the area where we conducted field training exercises. The location was crisscrossed by many streams and tributaries feeding into the Han River from the mountains and valleys bordering the river. As a result, logistics support units always have difficulty finding acceptable terrain to accommodate logistics support operations.

Of course, we conducted field training exercises during monsoon season. In preparation for the exercise, we performed a reconnaissance of the maneuver area to identify potential campsites and locations where we might establish field support facilities. The rainy season had not yet begun, and even then, finding suitable sites to establish our logistics camps was difficult. We eventually identified several potential sites to provide support operations.

By the time the exercise commenced, the monsoon season had begun, with frequent, daily rains. The logistics units moved to our pre-selected locations and established our support camps. The supply and transport company moved into a large empty river bed that was ideally located at the base of a few mountains and near several road networks that provided good access from multiple routes.

During the afternoon, we had some intermittent rains, and I began checking on each of the logistics units to ensure they were making satisfactory progress in getting set up and to determine if there were any issues to be resolved. As I approached the site where the supply and transportation company had set up in the river bed, I was met on the road by a column of the unit’s trucks rapidly moving away from the site.

When I arrived at the edge of the riverbed, trucks were rushing up the sides onto the road just ahead of an onrushing torrent of water. An overwhelming flash flood was crashing down from the mountains where the rain had recently fallen. The high ground in the center of the previously dry river bed was now an island quickly disappearing. Equipment that had been offloaded was flowing down the river. Downstream, another unit had been caught crossing the riverbed when the flash flood arrived unexpectedly. A truck with a built-up bed was trapped underwater in the middle of the river. All that remained visible was the very top of the built-up portion of the truck. The river bed, dry a short time ago, was now a rushing torrent at least 50 yards wide and more than 10 to 15 feet deep.

Later that day, I returned to my tent set up with the brigade headquarters at a site on a hill about a quarter mile away and sloped down from the bank of the Han River. The bivouac site on the hill was about 100 feet above the river's surface. That evening, I went to sleep in the tent with my driver. Around 2 a.m., shouts and loud noises awakened me. Water from the river was gushing under the tent's edge, and quickly moving uphill inside the tent.

My driver and I rushed outside and saw that the Han River had risen 100 feet from where it had been traversed the quarter-mile up the hill, swallowing everything in its path to reach our camp during the night. Fortunately, we had tactically parked our vehicle on the uphill side of the tent, where we had a path to exit the area. We quickly threw our equipment into the vehicle and evacuated the site.

When we returned to Camp Casey after the exercise, the rains continued. As predicted, the previously empty canals and gutters overflowed due to the monsoon rains. Torrents tore through the camp. In several areas, we responded by building sandbag barriers to slow the water flooding out of the canals, threatening to damage some of our buildings.

**Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ We lost a large amount of equipment in the riverbed during the flash flood. Unbelievably, not a single soldier was injured or drowned because everyone got out of the riverbed and away from the rapidly rising water just in time. But it easily could have been a terrible disaster. And the events could have been prevented by an in-country orientation briefing warning about the power and potential devastation of the Korean monsoons.

- ✓ Every day during an operation, get a weather report for the next 24 to 48 hours or guess what weather changes would impact your plans and then pick what your contingency action will or should be.

## Category: Training In Europe

### Following Tanks Too Closely

David White C-4 29200

In 1972, as a tank company Executive Officer and training officer in Germany, I organized and conducted night driver training for our tank drivers. This was before night vision goggles existed.

We set up a course through varied terrain in our local training area. To learn different night driving methods, the drivers negotiated the course using infrared, blackout, and no lights while winding through varied terrain that was off-road and on-road and going up and down numerous hills. During the training, the company motor sergeant accompanied me as my driver in a five-quarter ton truck at the rear of the tank column to respond to any mechanical issues, should they arise.

It had rained extensively the previous day, and water ponds dotted the course in various locations. As we followed the rear tank down a hill, we were unaware of a large pond of water at the bottom that was not visible to us in the dark. As the tank entered and passed through the pond, the water was forced out of the depression and off the trail.

As we closely followed the tank, a wall of water came rushing back over the road, submerging us in the truck. In startled surprise, the motor sergeant and I could only look at each other and laugh while we sat in the stalled truck with water up to our chests. After coldly savoring our **lesson learned**, we notified the rear tank to quickly return and pull us out of our unexpected quagmire.

## Nearly Drowned

Edwin K (EK) Smith H-1 28846

Every single soldier should know how to swim. I fished way too many out of the water after they nearly drowned.

## Where Are You?

John Carlson A-1 29380

In April 1971, I was an infantry platoon leader serving in Germany. My platoon was attached to an Armor company, and we were on the first day of a three-day brigade Operation Readiness Test (ORT) in the Hohenfels Military Training Area.

Right before going to Hohenfels, my company received many soldiers right out of Basic Training. Approximately 20% of those soldiers came to my platoon. That made the exercise even more challenging.

We stopped for the day, and I set the squads in a defensive position. Then, the squad leaders put their fire teams into fighting positions. Later, I went around to each squad to check their setup and found everything to be what I wanted. Indeed, it looked very secure in daylight.

Typically, before turning in for the night, I made one last inspection trip to each squad. Off I went to ensure there was noise and light discipline and the correct number of people were awake. However, with radio silence and light discipline, I could not find the squad positions. It was so dark that I was lucky to make it back to my headquarters location.

The next night, I ordered the squad leaders to come to my location and lead me back to their squad position.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ❖ Things change at night. Checkpoints are more challenging to find because trees/shrubs change shape while roads have different and more turns. So, however good you might be at navigation, realize that even in an area where you know the daylight positions, they can become harder to locate at night.
- ❖ If you see an issue, take action to correct it. Getting the squad leaders to guide me saved me time, as I avoided stumbling around and giving away our position.
- ❖ Experience is the best teacher.

### **Postscript**

After leaving the Army, I worked for an Electric Company, and at times, I would take crews on overnight trips. We were aiding other electric companies that were hard hit by weather-related issues. Most of these companies had damaged equipment and many customer power outages. So, what I learned in the Army helped me then. I made sure everybody knew my hotel room number and had a list of everybody's room numbers. And they told me their planned route to the next link-up or repair site.

## **Tanks Against Helicopters**

**David White C-4 29200**

Part of tactical training in tank battalions in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division stationed in West Germany in the early 1970s involved training against attack helicopters.

Initial instruction was in the classroom, including a video of the West German Leopard tank units training against U.S. Apache attack helicopters. The result was that approximately one helicopter was lost for every 27 tanks “killed.”



U.S. Army AH-1 Apache Tank Killer

When our tank company performed practical field exercises against attack helicopters, we had experiences similar to what we saw in the training video. Our opposing force helicopters were exceedingly difficult to identify in a tactical environment. There can be no question that attack helicopters have a significant tactical advantage over unsupported and unprotected tanks.

**Lesson Learned:** To survive helicopter attacks, tanks must be supported by some or all of the following: anti-aircraft missile teams, hunter-killer drones, scout and attack helicopters, or close support aircraft.

### **Always Have A Plan B**

**Thomas (Roz) Rozman A-3 29484**

While U. S. military involvement in South Vietnam was beginning to wind down, the Army returned its focus and force development onto the plains of Europe and its Soviet Bloc foe. The following vignette shares my “rubber meets the road” perspective of the early efforts toward reformatting the Army while I held the following four positions at Fort Hood during the 1970s:

- XO HHC/5-6 Mech Bn/1<sup>st</sup> BDE/1<sup>st</sup> Armor Div
- PLT LDR 1/A Comp 2-12 Bn/1<sup>st</sup> BDE/1<sup>st</sup> Cav Div
- XO HHC/1<sup>st</sup> BDE/1<sup>st</sup> Cav Div.
- XO HHC/1<sup>st</sup> BDE/1<sup>st</sup> Cav Div (TRICAP)

### **Vietnam’s Effect on the Army**

In the early 1960s, the Army became preoccupied with operations in Southeast Asia. That focus did not justify the expense and effort of conducting major force-on-force maneuver training operations in the Continental United States (CONUS)

The withdrawal of two divisions from Europe in 1968 to support the buildup of forces in Vietnam led the Army to initiate a force projection program termed Operation REFORGER. Starting in 1969, the U.S. deployed at least one CONUS Army division to Germany annually to participate in a multi-division maneuver exercise. The annual deployment was intended to demonstrate U.S. resolve and its ability to rapidly reinforce NATO forces with up to two additional divisions, with more troops to follow if necessary.

However, no divisional or multi-divisional exercises were conducted in CONUS, except work done from 1963-65 by the two-brigade 11th Air Assault Division to test air assault concepts.

When the test proved successful, the assets of the 11th Air Assault Division (Test), the 10th Air Transport Brigade, and portions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division within the United

States were merged into a single unit, named the 1st Air Cavalry Division. Then, the air assault division deployed to Vietnam.

There, the 1st Air Cavalry Division dramatically increased infantry battalion and brigade tactical and operational mobility, fire support, and logistical support by providing unprecedented levels of organic helicopter support. This new force structure delivered a dramatic advantage over traditional ground combat formations that were less mobile.

### **III Corps Refocusing**

As the force levels began to reduce in Asia, major formations began returning to the United States. Subsequently, force integration assessments began at Ft. Hood, Texas, with initiatives such as Air Cavalry Combat Brigade Tests 1 and 2. These tests evaluated types of organizations that would merge existing armored forces with air assault and air attack cavalry capabilities that had been developing in Southeast Asia. These efforts crafted lethal and highly agile integrated tactical and operational units capable of defeating much larger Soviet armored ground forces. Specifically, they focused on defeating Soviet Bloc attacks in Europe if that European contingency developed.

For example, when the 1st Air Cavalry Division returned from Vietnam, it was converted from an airmobile light infantry role into a triple capabilities role and designated the 1st Cavalry Division (TRICAP). The unit received an infusion of mechanized infantry and artillery to make it capable of missions needing three types of troops: air cavalry, airmobile, and armor/mech.

The division's 1st Brigade 3-battalion formation contained two armor and one mechanized infantry battalions. The 2nd Brigade was an air cavalry attack brigade with two attack helicopter squadrons. The 3rd Brigade was an air cavalry brigade of three air cavalry battalions (light infantry battalions) with dedicated helicopter assets provided by the division's reorganized aviation battalion. The Divisional Air Cavalry Squadron was organized as an armored cavalry organization, enhancing the division's armored maneuver, ground reconnaissance, and rear security capabilities.

In 1971, Ft. Hood and III U. S. Corps conducted and controlled the Army's first multi-division maneuver exercise in decades. The 1st Cavalry Division (TRICAP), operating as a U.S. armored formation with organic brigades configured with attack helicopters and air assault formations, was the friendly force during the maneuver exercise. The 2nd Armored Division, which had for the preceding year been providing Soviet-configured opposing forces during the Air Cavalry Brigade Tests, was the enemy opposition division fighting the TRICAP force.

To create a maneuver box of sufficient size to operate the divisions against each other without having to conduct operations beyond the reservation's boundaries, III Corps



decided to use its gunnery impact area. The huge gunnery impact area stretching some 20 or so miles north to south and as wide as 5 miles across was swept by troops in various company sectors. The soldiers moved online across the impact area for weeks, collecting and destroying dud munitions. The gunnery range addition created a large maneuver box some 25 miles north to south and 25 miles east to west.

Before sunrise on the first day of the exercise, four ground maneuver brigades crossed their start points and moved toward their initial tactical assembly areas. Their movement on the tank trails produced “rooster tails” of dust that rose well over 100 feet into the air and covered armored columns in a moving, suspended gray-white fog. Operation “Gallant Hand” had begun.

The exercise developed quickly. Formations moved with attacks, counterattacks, withdrawals, flanking movements, and other tactical maneuvers playing out over the length and width of the exercise box. Controllers kept reasonable order, and data collectors gathered their material. The activity was rapid, with little downtime. As the days grew into a week, the pace of operations began to tell on the units, especially the company trains. Sleep was intermittent, and fatigue began to claim its victims.



Battalion Colors 12th Cavalry Regiment Ft. Hood,  
Texas preceding Gallant Hand

A week into the exercise, 1st Battalion (mechanized), 12th Cavalry of the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade occupied a position along an east-west running ridge overlooking an extended area of level ground to the south.

### **Company Level Operations**

It was a brilliant sunny day. Company C's maneuver platoons and command post were forward of the trains by about 1200 meters, occupying their portion of the battalion's battle position. The ground in front of the company rose gradually from a large creek, almost a small riverbed, stretching east to west across several thousand meters of the company's sector.

As the executive officer (XO) of Company C, I was second in command of the company. Along with the 1st sergeant, we were responsible for the performance of the company's mechanized trains, which included the company administrative section, maintenance and vehicle recovery section, supply section, armorer, and the assigned medical element. Combined, this was usually 20 soldiers and ten vehicles.

During the exercise, the company trains were periodically augmented by elements from the battalion trains. Typically, augmentation included a refueling element, a tanker, a mess section, a 2½ ton truck with trailer and a resupply/ammunition truck, another three vehicles, and eight soldiers. When contacted on the radio, I would move the augmentation to the company trains area and assume control of moving logistics forward as needed.

Once in the augmented company trains, after coordination with the company commander and platoon leaders, I would arrange feeding, refueling, and resupply operations considering the tactical situation in the platoon areas. This support was significantly less difficult when the battalion was in brigade reserve, or the company was in battalion reserve.

On this day, I had just assumed control of the refuel/resupply and mess elements and was moving them forward. As we drove the five kilometers toward the trains, the radio traffic began painting a picture that enemy opposition forces had broken through friendly lines and were charging across the level ground to our front.

After I heard that 1st brigade was counterattacking and attack helicopters were engaging, I decided to position our resupply element in a hasty location about two kilometers behind the trains. When I reached the trains, I spotted the lead elements of an enemy tank battalion rushing toward the trains. That's when I ordered the trains to immediately disperse at speed to the last designated rear assembly area/rally point, as they had practiced during immediate-action drill training.

All elements were promptly cleared out of the counterattack zone using different routes. Some thirty minutes later, all elements had rendezvoused and consolidated with

the resupply element. The well-executed withdrawal maintained the integrity of the trains. In parallel, the company's platoons had withdrawn successfully as well.

Soon, the initial counterattack by friendly ground and air units struck the flank of the enemy armored division. Deadly fires by helicopters from our friendly air cavalry brigade, combined with the rapid positioning of air assault anti-armor teams, blunted the momentum of the enemy's surprise attack.

Then 1st Brigade deepened the counterattack on the ground with its armor, also supported by air cavalry attack units. The result: friendly forces defeated the enemy attack.

Late that night, the company trains closed on the exhausted platoons and command post of Company C. The company soldiers were fed and resupplied while the company's vehicles were refueled. It had been a long day.



Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment

Though many of III Corps' participating officers and NCOs had combat experience in Southeast Asia, most had never experienced rapid large-scale armor situations. For many, it was a watershed experience that the division's few WW II-era senior officers were glad to share.

For me and the soldiers of Company C Trains, the leadership lesson burned into everyone's brain was "always have a contingency...a Plan B, even a Plan C. We often heard the concept mouthed, but when we experience the unexpected, the value of alternative plans became crystal clear. Alternate plans are a military necessity for successfully operating and surviving. And the leaders who keep their heads during battlefield turmoil are worth their weight in gold. When a leader's brain stops working, chaos results unless another leader can intervene in time.

Thus, “Gallant Hand” was a great experiential training vehicle for armor units working with attack helicopters. In fact, it set the stage for much of the Army’s organizational structuring and training that was to come during the next two decades.

**Lesson Learned:** Plan-Bs are needed at, and benefit, all levels of operations from Army through Corps, Division Brigade, Battalion, Company, and Platoon. As described above:

- REFORGER was an Army-level Plan-B for Europe.
- III Corps’ extensive Plan-B actions prepared its units to return to Europe’s defense
- Immediate response plans were tactical Plan-Bs in Battalion and below units

## Semper Paratus



## Category: Skill Training

### Excellence Counts

Robert Pantier F-4 29021

Excellence is what separates good units from mediocre units. This trait does not have to be limited to the special operations community. Every commander and soldier should

set excellence as the goal. This pays huge dividends in combat. Always pay attention; little things count, and attention to detail typically will take care of the larger things.

## **SMEAC**

**Roger McCormick H-2 29156**

One of the things that all of us learned early on in our training was the format for a five-paragraph field order known as SMEAC to inform a unit about their next mission:

Situation

Mission,

Execution Plan

Admistration & Logistics

Command & Control

The SMEAC outline is easy to remember, flexible enough to grow with large/complex situations, and has served me well in nearly every new endeavor that requires organization. I still use it informally today.

## **MAIN-Train**

**Robert Pantier F-4 29021**

I learned MAIN-TRAIN from GEN Maxwell R. Thurman when he was my 82<sup>nd</sup> Division Artillery Commander (later VCSA and USSOUTHCOM CDR during Operation Just Cause) in Panama. He said: “The two number one priorities to ensure combat readiness are equipment maintenance and training.” I found his advice to be excellent.

## **Innovative/Realistic Training**

**Robert Pantier F-4 29021**

When I was a First Lieutenant in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Division Artillery, Colonel Vernon B. Lewis Jr. initiated the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise. That CALFEX had a battalion task

force maneuvering through the impact area, firing all their organic weapons, with “danger close” field artillery support, helicopter gunships, and Air Force tactical air strikes.

These exercises were high-risk, very realistic, and excellent training. With asymmetric warfare today’s norm, training how you will fight is even more critical.



Armor CALFEX

Photo by Defense Visual Information Distribution Service

When I got to Fort Campbell and assumed command of a UH-60 Blackhawk company, the unit was operating as a garrison, hanger-based aviation company. I knew we were unprepared to immediately deploy and operate in austere environments.

To change that, we started realistic flight missions using KY-28s and KIT 1A (secure crypto communications and encrypted IFF) all the time. Every month, the flight operations operated from a tent in the firebreak. Every mission was planned, briefed, and debriefed with the ENTIRE crew.

I also knew that U.S. forces win because they have the advantage at night. So, more than 90% of our flying at Fort Campbell was at night with night vision goggles. We trained hard and became HIGHLY proficient at operating at night and in adverse weather.

Such realistic training becomes additive if they are performed before the first time you go into combat.

**Lesson Learned:** NOTHING beats intensive, realistic training.

## Tactical/Technical Competence

Robert Pantier F-4 29021

I hesitate to say, but I could perform every (officer and enlisted) artillery task in my battery. I might not have been the fastest, nor could I perform the task the best, but I could gun a howitzer. More importantly, I knew what excellence looked like and what I could require of my soldiers to achieve it. Along these lines, I never asked a soldier, NCO, or officer to do anything I was unwilling to do.

**Lesson Learned:** The importance of tactical and technical competence cannot be overemphasized.

## Sully on Soldiering

James (Sully) Sullivan I-4 29460

I present you these gleanings, the fruit of my observation for 72 years. Most of the lessons learned I gathered plus a few I made, that seem to hold true in all seasons and weather. I will add to them as life goes on. I hope you will, too.

**LL #1:** Soldiers really die for each other's children. Thermopylae, 480 B. C.

**LL #2:** Think about serving, whenever you can.

**LL #3:** Be humble and gentle in victory, stern and unyielding in defeat.

**LL #4:** Do the harder right versus the easier wrong.

**LL #5:** Always maintain the element of surprise, even after you have surprised them.

**LL #6:** On Strategy I: Be stronger at the decisive point.

**LL #7:** On Strategy II: Don't invade Russia in the winter.

**LL #8:** On Leadership I: Go first, regardless of support from others

**LL #9:** On Leadership II: Set the Example.

**LL #10:** On Supervision: Speak in Headlines.

**LL #11:** By volume, leadership is only about 5% management, but about 90% management by impact.

**LL #12:** When you are surest about something, ask "Could I have this wrong?"

**LL #13:** Groups start solving problems when all parties converge on the definition of the problem.

**LL #14:** S1/S4 “Before” people - Plan and Organize.

**LL #15:** S2/S3 “After” people - Implement and Control.

**LL #16:** The key to motivating subordinates is to enrich their job.

**LL #17:** The three main motivators are Affinity(Love), Authority (Power), and Achievement (Glory).

**LL #18:** On Weapons: They are always loaded.

**LL #19:** On The Infantry: Don’t run when you can walk, don’t walk when you can sit, don’t sit when you can lie down, and don’t lie down when you can sleep. Eat whenever possible.

### **Physical Training**

**Robert Pantier F-4 29021**

I am a strong believer in PT. Being a soldier is physical work and being in shape enables soldiers to perform better. Artillery and Infantry soldiers have greater endurance; aviators can fly longer without getting tired, likewise for other branches. So, don’t let soldiers, NCOs, and officers look for excuses to miss PT. As a commander, I was the only one that could excuse anyone from PT.

Of course, missions to support other units were the reason for missing PT. However, internal training and maintenance flights were not. They were to be scheduled around PT.

Also, don’t conduct PT just to check the box. Make it demanding, ass-kicking tough, and challenging. At first, my soldiers complained about demanding PT, but after they got in shape and our artillery and aviation units were outrunning infantry units, they enjoyed the confidence and esprit it built. No offense. We still love the Queen of Battle.

### **Training Suggestions**

**Greg Holton F-3 28815**

Often, well-meaning suggestions to improve Army training are not received in the constructive manner they are intended.



## Rules of Engagement

Gilbert (Gil) Harper D-3 29104

One of a soldier's most significant challenges is to know when to resort to violence and the degree of violence that is appropriate to the situation. A good leader can simplify that challenge by providing clear Rules of Engagement (ROE).

During a field exercise at Fort Lewis, I inspected an ammunition supply point (ASP). I asked the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC), a bright and energetic staff sergeant, to explain the ASP ROE. I was amazed when he recited the installation ROE verbatim. It was obvious that this NCO took his responsibilities seriously, as demonstrated by his memorization of almost two pages of typewritten bureaucracy.

I praised his efforts and told him how impressed I was, but then I needed to evaluate his ability to apply the rules, not just memorize them. I posed the scenario that someone had just grabbed a howitzer round and was running away assumed to steal it. I then asked the sergeant if he was authorized to shoot the intruder. He gave the question a great deal of thought but finally admitted that he did not know.

We had failed to give him the tools to meet his responsibilities because **the installation's ROE was written to punish an infraction, not to educate and guide actions.**

We learned from this incident by writing the unit's ROE on a 3x5 card, which each soldier would carry in his/her pocket. Leaders would then quiz their soldiers with potential situations to test their understanding rather than their rote memory. That action better prepared us when our unit deployed to Somalia the following year.

**Lesson Learned:** Hesitation in battle can be deadly. Ensure your soldiers understand how to **apply** their ROE, in order to react immediately and appropriately.

**Category: Career Management**

## **Additional Duty**

**Carl Linke C-1 29368**

In 1975, I was a Captain. My day job was as a Company Commander in the 3rd Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) in Washington, DC. But, I soon got a night job that came about almost by accident.

Other officers in The Old Guard served as White House Social Aides, and one of my friends gave my name to the senior aide, a lieutenant colonel. He contacted me and asked if I might be interested. The assignment sounded very cool to me, so I said yes. What followed was a series of interviews in the Regiment, at the Pentagon, and in the White House during what became President Nixon's final days. Ultimately, I was selected for the "additional duty" serving President Gerald Ford.

Though the title sounds somewhat official, maybe glamorous, it is a glorified "gopher" job to assist during official functions at the White House. It included greeting guests at the South Portico entrance, checking coats and hats, escorting guests to the East Room (ballroom), introducing arrivals, leading guests to wherever the President wanted them, usually to the State Dining Room or ballroom, and chit-chatting to relax guests.

While at the White House, I rubbed elbows with people of various backgrounds. Under President Ford, one could expect a guest list of fifty people. Typically, the list was divided into thirds—one-third politicians, one-third sports figures, and one-third celebrities of the arts and sciences. The standard sequence of events for the evenings included a quick reception in the ballroom where guests gathered, followed by the President and Mrs. Ford descending the staircase from the family quarters, accompanied by the guest of honor, who was announced to the assembled guests. After that, a procession moved through the Cross Hall into the State Dining Room for dinner. After dinner, White House aides would lead (or prod and push) guests through the Red, Green, or Blue Rooms back to the ballroom for post-dinner entertainment. That could be anything from Joel Grey doing Cabaret to opera sung by Beverly Sills and, sometimes, low-brow, easygoing entertainment.

We had about twenty social aides working various assigned stations throughout the White House, from the cloakroom to family quarters (my favorite). The senior aide, usually a lieutenant colonel, would make assignments each night and provide event-specific instructions to the group. One night remains particularly vivid in my memory.

With the aides gathered in a small library room before the guests arrived, we were told that President Ford's daughter, Susan, had recently broken up with her boyfriend and that she would attend the dinner. The instructions to the male aides went something like,

“Following the formal entertainment, each of you will take turns asking the President’s daughter to dance.” He handed out a list so each of us knew when we were “on deck” to dance.

The evening sequence never varied. After dinner, the aides helped assemble the guests for entertainment, followed by dancing. Guests were known to remain and dance for hours, usually joined by the President and First Lady, who were late-night partyers. Per instructions, at some point, I was on deck.

Being the suave and debonair Academy graduate that I was, I introduced myself to Susan Ford and asked if she would like to dance. (Note: All the dances were slow especially in 1975.) She agreed, and we slipped onto the crowded dance floor and maneuvered our way to the middle. Making small talk with the President’s daughter—a high school senior—was a bit trying and demanded attention. We danced and talked, oblivious to the others in the room.



Pearl Bailey performing at the White House May 1970  
Photo Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

Suddenly, I looked up and noticed ALL the other couples had slid off the dance floor to form a circle around Susan and me. All except a couple on the opposite side of the ballroom floor. When that couple saw us still dancing, they almost skipped across the floor and rammed into us—the other couple: President Ford and Pearl Bailey.

With no hesitation, while in the arms of the President, Pearl Bailey said to Susan and me, “You two better get off this floor, or we’re going to knock you down!” to which the

President chuckled. Discretion being the better part of valor, Susan and I politely, without objection or comment, melted into the circled crowd to watch the President and his partner finish the song with a bow amid the guests' clapping approval.

**Lessons Learned:** Despite being charged with a “high-level” task, one should always:

- ✓ Approach all missions with eyes open.
- ✓ Assess the surroundings.
- ✓ Avoid becoming myopic.
- ✓ Always defer to the President.

### **You're Fired**

**Edwin K (EK) Smith H-1 28846**

The fastest way to get into trouble in this man's Army is to lose control of the government's money or your morals.

### **Six Lessons for a Successful Army Career**

**Harry Crumling I-3 29470**

#### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1: Integrity is non-negotiable.** Not only in your performance but for those in the chain of command above and below you, as well. If you become aware of issues involving a lack of integrity (and you will), confront those involved immediately. Don't let it fester. So be it, you must fall on your sword to bring attention to such issues.

**LL #2: Work hard.** You don't always have to be the first to start the day and the last to leave at night. But if you gain and sustain a reputation for being a hard worker, everyone will notice and appreciate your dedication.

**LL #3: Work productively.** This starts with knowing your organization cold — including knowing all the applicable publications, regulations, command guidance, and history that govern your job. Until you do this, you will not be competent in your job. After establishing this baseline on the way things should be done, you will have a solid starting point for improvement. Go out of your way to make as many friends as possible among IT, logistics, and maintenance support people and organizations.

**LL #4: Know your subordinates and how to work with them effectively.** If we didn't do this in my Ranger class, we failed. Learn to delegate, supervise, and hold NCOs accountable. Of my contemporaries who rose to 4-star rank, this trait set them apart from their peers. From my time as an Inspector General, I noted firsthand that I could walk into any Army unit and, after only a few minutes, determine if the commander had mastered the art of delegation to NCOs. Make yourself an expert on NCOES. And know where each of your NCOs stands within that system. Read and absorb what is in the personnel records of your enlisted troops. These records are not for the S1 or AG folks. They are for you, the leader.

**LL #5: Socialize with non-West Pointers.** During TRADOC schools and initial assignments, you will see that many West Pointers cling together socially while often excluding building relationships with ROTC and OCS officers. Don't do this! It will come back to bite you. Many of these non-USMA officers are likely to reappear in your chain of command, and you will have missed an opportunity to expand your network earlier.

**LL #6: Be a Ranger.** As MAJ John Martling, USMA '55, my West Point firstie year Psychology professor, said. "If you are going to be serious about becoming a fully qualified combat arms officer, you must attend and successfully complete Ranger School."

**Walk Through the Open Door**

**William Spracher A-3 28838**

Early in my Army career, I thought that military success meant being a hardened field soldier whose mettle is tested and adequately validated only by success and courage on the battlefield. In other words, like practically all of our instructors and tactical officers at USMA, you had to have a chest full of medals earned in combat. But my military career was a series of doors closing to live-fire conflict.

After being advised that we new Second Lieutenants who chose the Military Intelligence (MI) branch would be sent to Vietnam immediately after completing our 1-year details in Infantry or Armor, I was excited to be able to ride around in tanks in Germany and then head to Vietnam to earn all those awards for valor. In preparation, I took as many intelligence courses as I could. Sadly, it didn't quite work out the way I expected.

About a month before our detail was up, we received a letter from MI branch saying the war was winding down and we weren't needed in Vietnam anymore. Instead, we were told to unpack our bags and do our best to excel during the rest of our 3-year tour in Germany. We wouldn't even be allowed to return to CONUS for branch training to get a new MOS formally stamped on our foreheads.

I was crestfallen and thought my career was over. However, I decided to continue intensive training/education for the rest of my career. After serving as a Battalion S2 (intelligence officer) in Germany, attending graduate school, and then Command and General Staff College, I volunteered as a Brigade S2 in the Korean Demilitarized Zone. For me, it was the closest thing to facing a real enemy available in the 1980s.

After returning to the States, Operation Desert Shield/Storm emerged while I was a battalion commander at the School of the Americas at Ft Benning. I quickly volunteered to fight in Iraq. But I was rejected because I was in a locked-in command position, and the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) wouldn't release me. Even worse, TRADOC subsequently denied me the opportunity to return to Korea as a Division G2, a position for which the Division Commander had accepted me.

Now, I knew my MI career was over. Nevertheless, I capitalized upon the fact that I had qualified as a Latin America Foreign Area Officer (FAO) despite never receiving any of the four pillars of FAO training. So, I spent the last half of my 30-year career either serving in or dealing with, that critical region of the world that the U.S. traditionally neglects because it's relatively peaceful and in our backyard.

I achieved my ultimate goal as an FAO—serving as Army Attaché to Peru and Defense Attaché to Colombia, the only two nations in the hemisphere declared “critical threat” and where deployed soldiers received hostile fire pay.

Moreover, I began a parallel career as an academic, enjoying teaching assignments at West Point, the National Defense University, and an adjunct role at the Inter-American Defense College. Along the way, I earned two master's degrees and a doctorate. Then, after Army retirement, I had a 17-year stint as a professor at the National Intelligence University (NIU). There, I could share my knowledge and experience with multiple generations of young military personnel, many of whom had the opportunity to serve in combat that I had never been afforded.

**Lessons Learned:** During this life experience, I learned four things:

**LL #1** Take whatever opportunity opens up, even if it looks like your second or third choice. Then, do your very best to take advantage of it to improve not only your own life but also the lives of others.

**LL #2** Teaching and mentoring others is much more rewarding than focusing on yourself and your success.

**LL #3** When one door closes, another will inevitably open. When it does, walk through it confidently with your head held high, and you will succeed. Your contributions to your God, your nation, and your family will be just as rewarding, or more so, as anything achieved in combat.

**LL #4** What you give to America's future generations, be they children, grandchildren, or students, counts most and determines your true mettle as a man.

## **Fork In The Road**

**Phillip (Phil) Terry E-2 29231**

It was the summer of 1977. I just finished the Field Artillery Advanced Course and was preparing to attend graduate school. That training would lead to a teaching position at West Point.

Then the phone rang. My future Department Head at West Point explained that the Frank Borman Commission had just completed its report on the 1976 cheating scandal at West Point. That report recommended that my teaching position be filled with a Major who had graduated from the Command and General Staff College. I was neither. He told me that the Academy would not challenge this recommendation, so I needed to find another assignment.

I was devastated. I wanted to return to West Point to teach and pay back to the institution that significantly impacted my life. But I had to move on. I then called MILPERCEN and explained my predicament to my assignments officer. He informed me that there was an ongoing board selection process for an overseas graduate school assignment. He asked if I wanted my record to go in front of this board for consideration. I said, "Yes."

Two weeks later, I got a return call from MILPERCEN to pack my bags because I was headed to England to earn a master's degree in Aeronautical Engineering. That degree led to several significant assignments. One was helping develop the anti-tank Hellfire missile. Another was assisting President Reagan in starting the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which eventually helped win the Cold War.

Additionally, that unexpected fork in the road later led to a successful engineering career in private industry, where I helped develop, design, and test missile systems for the Army.

**Lesson Learned:** Along one's path in life, doors will be closed, and others will be opened. Keep faith in yourself. Don't look back. Attack your new path with passion and vigor. Strive daily for excellence and do it with character. Good things will happen to you.

## Passed Over

### Joseph Boswell A-4 29400

Here are a few things I wish I had done during my military career:

- ✓ Kept an informal diary including the names of the folks I worked with in each of my assignments.
- ✓ Recorded any highlights experienced during those assignments.
- ✓ Had a cell phone to easily take pictures of the folks I worked with.
- ✓ Managed my career by working with the assignment officers at DA.

Instead, I simply took the assignments given without realizing or questioning the impact they might have during promotion time. So, I spent twelve years as a Field Artillery (FA) officer serving in various logistic and logistical billets, including:

- Service Battery Commander
- Battalion Maintenance Officer (two times)



- Division Artillery Asst S-4, 702nd Material Office, coordinating repair of all tanks and FA material
- Chief of the Professional Development Branch of the Weapons Department at the Ordnance School



Ordnance Corps & School, Ft Gregg-Adams, VA

The result was that I was passed over twice to Major. Fortunately, after the second pass over, I was working for an old Lieutenant Colonel who was the Weapons Department Chief at the Ordnance School. He recommended I branch transfer to the Ordnance Corps. Once I did, I was promoted to Major the next time the board met and later was promoted below the zone to LTC.

**Lesson Learned:** Too late, I learned that the assignment officer's priority is to fill openings and secondarily to manage an officer's career.

### **Control Your Trajectory**

**Bruce E. Robinson E-1 29379**

Maintain control of your career trajectory. Although stakeholders like the Army, your branch, assignments, and selection boards impact career patterns, we maintain overall control. Organizations like the Army seek, recruit, and develop the best talent to perpetuate their purpose and goals. To achieve those goals, the military possesses and applies unique capabilities to develop and promote talent from within its structure.

Regardless of one's entry source, the Army is an excellent repository of developmental talent, much of which is within individuals ready to be tapped.

Soldiers, civilians, and government representatives are vigilant in identifying and referring individuals with potential to the military services. The Army offers great flexibility recruiting and developing raw talent, which can be molded into an acceptable form for entry into the vast pools of opportunity within its structure. Such occurs by evaluating, developing, and enabling folks to rise to the level requisite for success. The Army does a commendable job of developing hidden talent, with many examples of soldiers rising from privates to senior-grade officers.

In my case, I was a junior officer with no interest in serving beyond the mandatory 5-year obligation after graduating from West Point. I aimlessly drifted between active-duty assignments, unaware of educational requirements/opportunities, until trading my Regular Army commission for a U.S. Army Reserve commission. At West Point, the Reserve and National Guard Reserve were never spoken of as components of the Army and received disparaging remarks from the active forces.

Upon entering law school, I became the traditional Army Reservist, meaning a weekend warrior, to supplement my VA educational stipend. Using self-help, I located a nearby reserve unit and was accepted into its ranks. In the reserve culture at that time, you made your own way. There was no formal personnel management system, so one was adrift in a sea of unawareness. Such was no consequence to me since I intended to only serve during the three years of law school. I lost count. I served for 32 years.

During those years, I was surrounded by people constantly pushing me to do more, to be more, to take the difficult assignments, and to be educationally and professionally prepared. My mentors, who saw through my nonchalant demeanor, relentlessly demand on me to know and to do. Consequently, I availed myself of every educational opportunity, professional development, diverse assignments and submitted school and promotion packets.

As I matured, I positioned and mentored subordinates in a like manner. No excuses. Just do it.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** In summary, guide your career trajectory. Begin by studying organizational behavior and culture and assess your fitness for it. Next, learn the prerequisites for career advancement and become qualified as early as possible. Position yourself for use by the

organization, be flexible, and be attentive to trends/changes. In parallel, communicate with those ahead of you, sharing where you want to go and asking for their advice. Plus, pull forward those behind you to help them and the organization succeed.

**LL #2:** Meanwhile, understand that promotions are in the organization's best interest and not individuals. One may be fully qualified but not selected. Be prepared. Be Patient. Your time will come, but not necessarily when you anticipate it.

## **I Want To Be A Military Veterinarian**

**William (Bill) McBeth I-3 28758**

Growing up, I had many career and life aspirations. Simultaneously and in no order, I wanted to be a cowboy, rancher, carpenter, heavy equipment operator, welder, engineer, soldier, Marine, and teacher. But most of all, I wanted to be a veterinarian! How to do it all? Below are my thoughts on veterinary medicine and how it might be possible to do it, along with other career desires.

I have always had an abiding affinity for animals, wild or domesticated, large or small, mean or loveable, and tame or dangerous. I started working closely with animals as a middle schooler and then as a young adult (16 through 18).

Excelling math and science in school was easy; I also enjoyed language arts and social studies, and did well in athletics, especially wrestling. I likely could have been accepted at many colleges. However, influenced by my family's military background and financial constraints, I chose to apply to West Point. For example:

- ✓ Financially my family could not easily afford paying my way through college, and the military provided a way to achieve my education goals – the foundation of a career as an engineer or veterinarian
- ✓ Both sides of my family, had a long history of military service, dating back to the French and Indian wars.
- ✓ Many of the men I admired at home and working on the ranch were WW II or Korean War veterans.
- ✓ It was the Vietnam era, and there was the potential for the Department of Defense to send students to veterinary School

- ✓ My Dad – A rough, tough rancher-cowboy who loved animals, but because of economic reasons rooted in the Great Depression, became a master self-employed, all-around get-it-done construction guy. He also, as a young man, applied and qualified as an alternate to the Academy. Unfortunately, he was never able to attend.

I was luckier than my Dad. I won an appointment. Arriving at the Academy, my personality was pretty well set! From the very first day as a cadet and the first day as an officer, I was determined to bend the military to my will and not the other way around. While I did quite well academically and athletically, my military aptitude didn't fit the mold.

None the less, as a Firstie classman, I was academically high enough to select the Engineer Branch. Because I was determined to work in construction, applying heavy equipment, and knew that the 802nd Engineer Battalion in Thailand was one of the busiest construction battalions in the Corps of Engineers, I chose it as my first assignment.

During the six years after graduation, I had a non-traditional career path, but by hook or by crook, I was able to do the types of Regular Army engineer assignments I loved.

After graduation, as a 2nd Lieutenant, I chose to attend Airborne School, which was pure fun, followed by Ranger School, which was an enjoyable challenge! My first brush with authority followed at the Engineer Officer Basic Course at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. Several Engineer Airborne Rangers and I skipped an exercise involving a bunch of the same type of training we had just completed. BAD IDEA! As the prison warden said in the movie *Cool Hand Luke*, "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

I received an Article 15 with the caveat that it would not be on my record if I kept my shit together. I made sure, that was not a problem.

Shortly after being promoted to 1st Lieutenant, out of the blue, I got a call from the Engineer Branch. The initial unit assignment that I had wrangled was gone! The 802d was being pulled out of Thailand to be deactivated.

The assignment officer asked me, "What would you like to do?" I said a short tour with a construction battalion doing a lot of work. The officer replied that two units were available, one in Korea and one in Vietnam. Plus, he could almost guarantee a construction battalion in Korea. On the other hand, Viet Nam was a crap shoot.

I was naïve enough to believe that our military was in Vietnam to finish the job and that I could always go there later. So, I chose Korea. Thus, I ended up in the 44th Engineer Battalion, which was an excellent assignment because of the experience I sought. It was doing the largest construction project outside of Vietnam, with the responsibility to meet

performance deadlines for construction, or the U.S. government would have to pay penalties.

The effort required constructing a camp in a remote mountain valley west of Pusan, to contain 100 40x100 foot ammunition bunkers in two tiers, along with outer perimeter fencing, roads, sewers, utilities, etc. We are talking about the complete site preparation and installation package. Lucky me, I was assigned to the Battalion's Operations staff as assistant operations officer in charge of the surveyors, draftsmen, soils lab, etc.

After three months, I became the Charlie Company Commander and held that position for the last ten months of my tour. Every line company had two officers. My company operations officer was another 1st LT. What a hoot! They gave us bulldozers, road graders, scrapers, rock crushers, and dynamite!

What to do after Korea? Of course, I wanted to go to another Construction Battalion or at least a Light Equipment Company. Plus, it seemed a good time to go to Vietnam as there should be plenty to do there. So, I called Branch. Wrong! The United States was leaving Vietnam, and I was penciled in to go to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne at Fort Bragg.

However, I wasn't interested in little dozers and dump trucks. I researched engineering units in Germany, learning that two Light Equipment Companies and a couple of Construction Battalions were there. But my assignment request put me in a crap-shoot situation. And it did not go as I planned in Germany. I was sent to the 9th Engineers, a non-divisional combat battalion. There I became a platoon leader in one of the line companies, commanding three squads of 5-ton dump trucks, along with a bucket loader. My soldiers were carpenters, plumbers, and electricians without big, powerful tools. Bummer!

However, I grew to enjoy being a platoon leader, going to the field, building bridges, and handling the people challenges as we took understrength and underfunded units and turned them into a real force to be reckoned with.

Meanwhile, the battalion headquarters had an elite platoon called the Heavy Equipment Section! It had three cranes, three road graders, and due to maintenance challenges, was responsible for all of the dozers and 10-ton tractor-trailers in the battalion for a total of 10 vehicles.

Traditionally, it was led by the best 1<sup>st</sup> LT in the battalion, which probably wasn't me! But I wrangled the job and was really good at it. Surprisingly, it became one of the most rewarding jobs I had in the service. Lots of action, lots of responsibility, and lots of opportunities to succeed or fail.

But later, a fly appeared in the ointment! The Army wanted to promote me to Captain, and the Battalion Commander wanted me to be the Headquarters Company Commander.

I already had some experience in that position, but it was not what I had in mind! My preferred course was to remain as the Equipment Section Leader until my post-graduation five-year commitment ended, then leave the Army and head to veterinary school.

Looking at my options, I decided I didn't need to be a Captain. So, I sent a letter to Branch turning down the promotion. My assignments officer counseled me that that decision would end my military career. No matter, I stayed as Equipment Section Leader until my wife, Anne, told me she was pregnant and wanted to have our child at home in Germany. That made sense to me. Plus, the battalion needed a Maintenance Officer in the worst way.

Once again, I wrote to Branch. This time, I asked if I could have that promotion I turned down. Surprisingly, they fired back a yes and, even more surprisingly, gave me some back pay. To ensure my wife had more time with her family, I also extended a year in Germany.

In parallel, I remained focused on a career as a veterinarian. That focus included self-educating myself by reading veterinary surgeon Dr James Herriot's famous book series, based on his 1970 bestseller, *All Creatures Great and Small*, describing his mixed-practice in Yorkshire, England. The result was that I became hooked on becoming a mixed-practice veterinarian.

To accomplish that goal, I applied for a health professions assignment to attend a veterinary college and become an Army Veterinary Corps Officer.

Meanwhile, I was stationed with the 9<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion in Germany. It had atomic demolition munitions, and I had to serve a stint as a reaction force commander for the ammo dump. Weeks later, a very crusty Artillery Colonel coached me on being a better reaction force commander guarding his atomic munitions. When he ended, he asked me, "And where is your career headed, Lieutenant?"

To which I responded, "Sir, I'm out of here! I turned down promotion to Captain, and I'm going to be a veterinarian."

"Good Luck with that!" he responded. "But when you get to Fort Dix to muster out of the Service, seriously consider staying in the Army by joining the Reserves."

I initially thought what he said was BS, until the Regular Army, as part of the Vietnam War draw down, ended its program to train veterinarians. That's when I decided to follow his advice and transitioned into the Reserve Army as an Engineer Officer at Ft. Dix. The good news was that Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) duty only consisted of one drill weekend a month and one annual training period per year lasting for two or three weeks. Plus, credit as a reservist depended almost entirely on how much you could participate. That left me with plenty of time to work on my veterinary education. So, I enrolled at

Kansas State University, did a year of pre-vet, and was accepted into the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The bad news was IRR status made it challenging to qualify for a “Good Year” for retirement, there was no pay, and commits yourself and your family to the potential that you may be called up for active duty at any time. However, during those 5 intensive years in veterinary school I qualified for retirement years through correspondence.

Surprisingly, going Reserve became one of the most pivotal decisions of my life because it allowed me to do satisfying engineering work while expanding my veterinary education. For example, I attended summer annual training with various Engineer units (1st, 4th, and 52nd Engineer Battalions) and had the opportunity to write the first draft of the Fort Riley Environmental SOP. Meanwhile, when I was not working Reserve assignments, I attended Kansas State University and took veterinary correspondence courses for five years, significantly paid for by the GI Bill.

Then life got even better. In September 1987, the Army Reserve activated the 993rd Medical Veterinary Service Detachment (VS) in Aurora, Colorado, and they needed veterinarians.

Hoorah! I jumped at becoming a regular reservist as part of an active unit. So, I transferred to the Veterinary Corps. By then, I was a Major in the Engineers, and I rudely learned that majors in the Engineers were only smart enough to be captains in the Veterinary Corps. So, I became a Captain for the third time!



Major McBeth during a Medical Readiness Training Exercise in Panama

No matter, after years of wanting, I was off and running as a military veterinarian. Unfortunately, do you think that an army veterinarian only does veterinary work? Nope! Every VS soldier has plenty of regular soldier work to do. Over the course of my reserve career, I was the unit supply officer, training officer, operations officer, and unit commander. Plus, I usually spent at least two to three days per month doing Army Reserve stuff at home in the evenings. However, it was all good. I commanded the 993rd Medical Detachment for four years; it was the best command experience of my life.

I trained a brand-new unit and core group of soldiers who later deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan and outperformed their active-duty peers. I also had an opportunity to advance myself professionally. I focused on food safety, population animal health, epidemiology, and regulatory vet medicine. I had the chance to serve in a wide variety of environments and was challenged professionally every step of the way. My soldiers and I also completed annual training missions, replacing active-duty personnel. In every instance, we met and exceeded the performance standards of the active soldiers we replaced while serving in Turkey, Italy, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, and Mongolia.

Along the way, as I enjoyed a great career, I regained my Major rank and retired after 32 years of service as a Lieutenant Colonel Veterinary Corps Officer. And although my rank progression was unconventional (2d Lt – 1st Lt – Cpt – 1st Lt – Cpt – Maj – Cpt – Maj – LTC) I had the opportunity to re-pin on my Captain and Major insignias.





**Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** The big lesson for me was if you don't give up on the Army, the Army won't give up on you.

**LL #2:** Don't give up on your core objectives. When I encountered a career obstacle, I was always able to find a way around it.

**LL #3:** Military Aptitude can take a variety of forms.

**LL #4:** The Army turned out to be a great fit for a pretty unconventional soldier.

**LL #5:** While being unconventional, don't throw away your old rank insignia – it might come in handy again!

**LL #6:** Whether you are an Academy graduate or just starting out from high school, a military career and veterinary medicine are compatible and within your reach. A young person's career and time in service can start by enlisting in a Guard or Reserve unit as early as junior in high school.

**LL #7:** A military veterinary career and a civilian veterinary career are also possible.

**LL #8:** Being an engineer or for that matter a welder, carpenter, or cowboy are additive skills.

**LL #9:** Financial challenges can be overcome with your military pay and some imagination. For example, Combining GI Bill payments, Reserve Pay with side jobs such as mowing hay, working as a well drilling laborer and as a welder; along with the wife working a job allowed us to get out of Vet school with virtually no debt and also eased opening our private vet service to practice just like James Herriot.

**LL 10:** Military Veterinary Medicine can provide you with a breadth of experience that you will get nowhere else:

- Clinical Practice
- Specialty Training such as surgery, toxicology, advanced degrees
- Food Safety
- Agricultural Practices
- Regulatory Vet Medicine
- Animal Disease Control
- Foreign Animal Diseases

**LL 11:** A military career offers very attractive development benefits, challenging career options, and good retirement benefits.

**LL 12:** Making the above lessons learned work, requires determination, persistence, and hard work on your part.

**Missed Combat**

**William (Bill) Trivette C-3 29350**

In the Spring of 1970, our Class filed into a Thayer Hall Auditorium for branch selection. In our day, we selected branches by class rank. The number one man (women were not admitted to USMA until 1976) would stand and announce his branch choice, and so on, down to the Class Goat (last in order of merit). Even before I entered West Point, I wanted to be an Infantry officer, so when my name was called, I stood and proudly answered, "Infantry, Sir."

Shortly after branch selection, those selecting Infantry met to determine our first assignment. I got my choice again. I selected the 82d Airborne Division, with a follow-on assignment to Vietnam six months later with the 101st Airborne Division.

I had no reservations about volunteering for Vietnam. At its peak in April 1969, 543,000 U.S. Army soldiers were assigned to Vietnam. Although, by that time, there were regular anti-war protests all over the country. Just the month before our graduation, four Kent State University students at a protest were shot and killed by National Guard troops.

Before our graduation in June 1970, the U.S. war policy shifted to turning the ground war over to South Vietnamese troops. By graduation, the drawdown of American military personnel in Vietnam had decreased to 300,000.

After completing Infantry Officers Basic, Airborne, and Ranger Schools, I reported to the 82d in February 1971. The Army was in rough shape because of the drain of the war. My first platoon had about half its authorized strength, and the privates were just waiting to leave the Army.

I remember being in the field for training when I received a letter from the Infantry Branch telling me that because of the drawdown, I was not required to go to Vietnam, nor would I be guaranteed that I would be assigned to the 101st. The letter asked: Did I still want to go to Vietnam?

I don't remember what I considered as I thought about the question. Fear of death or injury certainly wasn't a factor since, at that age, I never thought I would be the one getting killed. That would be someone else. I probably considered that the United States was leaving our combat role. It was a different war for the U.S. than in previous years. Whatever my reasons, I took my name off the list to go to Vietnam.

**Lessons Learned:** Not serving in Vietnam is one of the greatest regrets of my life. I now feel my duty was to serve there along with many of my classmates. I've heard it said, "Life is not a trial run." We don't get to rewind the clock and make a different decision.

## **Success As An Impact Player**

**Richard (Dick/Rich) Measner G-3 29190**

You need to decide early in your career (like day one) if you want to be an 'impact player' or a 'sideline player'. It needs to be a conscious decision, and you must be willing to commit to the personal investment required by your decision. Both types of individuals are essential for the success of the Army and for success of society. Impact players take the lead and seek out challenges/opportunities wherever they go. Sideline players make up the majority of steadfast (grunt) workers who contribute greatly to unit success.

Impact players must have the courage, initiative, and vision to see/recognize the needs and opportunities before them. For their broader, even enhanced development, they can greatly benefit from seeking out and developing at least one personal/professional friendship with a senior officer at each duty station (to include schooling tours).

The senior officer you seek out should be an 'impact player' themselves. For lieutenants, this means finding a Maj/Ltc/Col. For captains, it means finding a Ltc/Col/BG to create a special relationship. This requires significant confidence, courage, and initiative to approach someone more senior in rank personally. But, the rewards, recognition, learning, and life-long friendships are priceless and play an important part in the long-term success of an impact player.

A vital key to the impact player's success is the friendships/visibility they develop during each assignment. This requires investing the time necessary in the mentor relationship, completing any suggested readings, and acting on the advice you receive from your mentor(s). And, as your mentor-mentee relationship(s) matures over time, you make your name known by exceeding others' expectations!

## **Heaven Sent Professor of Military Science**

**John Norton Jr. B-3 29307**

Having successfully served as the 2nd Brigade S-3 Operations Officer of the 7th Light Infantry Division in Fort Ord, California from July 1984 to Jun 1986, I was selected for a battalion position within the brigade. I became the Executive Officer (XO) of the 5/21st Infantry Battalion. The following year, our unit was alerted for deployment to the Sinai for the Multi-National Forces Observer (MFO) mission for the Spring-Summer 1987.

During the time the battalion was preparing for this deployment, my wife, Cindy, began having some serious health issues in the form of Clinical Depression, as diagnosed

by her therapist. My concern was her ability to care for our large family of five children, ages 1 - 9 years old, while I was away in the Sinai. I also considered the impact on her if I was selected for command of an Infantry Battalion if her health issues persisted.

At such a critical juncture, I felt I should approach the Lord in prayer. I needed His guidance on how to resolve the situation. As I went to Him in fasting and prayer, I finally received an answer that seemed very difficult to accept. It was an impression to give up on my lifelong ambition to command a battalion and find another way to serve in the Army in a capacity where I could preserve our family and help Cindy recover from her illness.

It was at a time of year that I knew the battalion command selection board would soon begin its work, and having served successfully as a Brigade S-3 and Battalion XO, I felt confident that I would be selected for command. So, I called the Infantry branch and explained to one of the branch officers that, based on my family circumstances, I needed to have my name removed from those being considered for command selection.

The Lt. Colonel I spoke with tried his best to ensure I had thought everything through and knew what I was doing. After convincing him I had, he said he would take care of it. I also shared my decision with my dad (USMA '41), and he was certainly disappointed to hear my news, but he said, "Do what you think is right, son. I'm behind you all the way."

After the calls, I was unsure what to do and if I had any future left in the Army. But when I prayed about my family's future, I felt calm that everything would be okay.

Within a week, out of nowhere, I received a call from Captain Kevin Miller, a close friend who served with me at Fort Ord. Kevin explained that the current Professor of Military Science (PMS) at Brigham Young University was rotating out of the job that summer. When he learned about the opening, he felt moved to call to see if I'd be interested in the position.

When he raised that possibility, I felt a burst of light go through my body as if the Lord had just answered my prayer. When I shared this news with Cindy, she was ecstatic, hardly believing there might be such a perfect answer to our prayers. The PMS assignment might offer what she needed to get on the road to recovery.

The next day, I called the Infantry Branch to find out what I needed to do to apply for the position. I was told that ROTC Professor of Military Science positions were now filled by selection boards similar to command selection boards and that other Lt. Colonels had already requested to be considered. At that time, I was only a promotable Major. My enthusiasm that this assignment was meant to answer to my prayer took a sobering back-step when I realized what I was up against.

Cindy and I continued to fast and pray about this assignment. When the board selections were announced, I was elated to learn that I would be the next Army PMS at BYU. I can't begin to describe how excited we were. And in our many prayers of gratitude that followed, I knew more assuredly that the Lord answers prayers and when you receive those answers or even just impressions, you must do what the Lord asks.

**Lesson Learned:** When life gets uncertain, and you must make hard decisions, draw upon your faith in the Lord. Pour out your heart to him and listen patiently. He may not answer right away or in the way you hope for, but He will answer. In this case, His answer was beyond our wildest dreams. It was just what Cindy and our family needed.

### **Thankful For Good Fortune**

**Don Pratt A-1 29449**

It was early in 1976. Having been recently promoted to Captain, I was concluding my assignment at West Point and preparing to depart for my next assignment in Korea. My assignments officer in the Infantry Branch gave me a choice between two open positions in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division.

First was the J4 position on the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) at the Joint Security Area (JSA) in Panmunjom. The other was as the Assistant Chief of Staff G-1 serving in the Division Officer Assignments position at Camp Casey. I took a day to decide between the two and ultimately chose the Assistant G-1 position. That choice aligned me with my alternate Personnel Specialty (41), where I had served in earlier staff assignments. The J4 position was subsequently assigned to Captain Arthur Bonifas, USMA 1966.

On 18 August 1976, a group of US and South Korean troops were trimming a Poplar tree on the DMZ in the heavily guarded zone that divides the two Koreas. They were attacked with clubs and axes by North Korean soldiers attempting to prevent the trimming operation. During the melee that ensued, two US Army officers were bludgeoned to death with axes and clubs. One was Captain Bonifas.

**Lesson Learned:** But for a single decision and a blessing from above, there go I.

### **Select Your Branch**

**Thomas E. Boytim I-4 29091**

While serving as a Chaparral Vulcan platoon leader in the 6th of the 56th Air Defense Artillery Battalion (ADA), we were a tenant unit living on Bitburg Air Force Base, Germany.

Winter operational readiness inspections (ORI) had my platoon deploying to windswept hilltops to provide close-in air defense support to maneuver units. One frigid January, we were deployed and I was out checking on my soldiers. My Jeep's heater didn't work. Everyone was cold.



M163 Vulcan Air Defense System, courtesy Military Analysis Network

As my driver returned to our battery headquarters, I noticed the Air Force Hospital deployed in climate-controlled vans. Through the windows, I could see personnel in short-sleeve scrubs! My first thought was that there are big differences in how the Air Force treats its people. And secondly, how well medical types have it. That was an epiphany.

Shortly after returning from the field, I met an Army dentist and his wife, who was on vacation in Germany. They stopped into the Bitburg Officer Club (OClub) for dinner and a drink. While there, he played a slot machine and hit the jackpot. The club rule for such payouts required a member to sign and witness the payout. I just happened to be closest.

When I signed as the witness, I noticed he was stationed at West Point. He asked how I liked the Army. Thinking back to the ORI, I said, "I'd rather do what you're doing!"

His reply was, “Well then, why don’t you.”

I said the die was cast. I was too old ... bla bla bla. He almost fell off his barstool, laughing at my fatalistic comments. When he quit laughing he answered. “If you really want to be a dentist, go for it!”

He and his wife invited me to dine with them. During the evening, he wrote my address down. The following morning, they left for Frankfurt. A truly chance encounter that I didn’t realize would change my life.

A month later, a big envelope arrived in the mail from him. It was from Major James B. Reddin, who worked at the U.S. Army Hospital, West Point. The package held an application for the Army Health Professions Scholarship program and a list of admissions directors for every U.S. dental program.

The attached note stated he’d give me a letter of recommendation. And he finished it with typical army directions: “I’ve done my part; now it’s time for you to get your ass in gear and do it!”

Little did I know he would become my mentor and support.

The Army did not respond favorably to my request, even though I got accepted to a dental school for three years. My new mentor told me never to give up.

As I neared the completion of my 5th year of obligatory service because of attending West Point, I advised my branch of my desire to become a dentist. Branch was totally unsupportive. I was told the ADA’s priorities were:

- #1** The needs of the Army
- #2** The wants of the Army
- #3** The wants of the individual.

More or less a polite . . . screw you. At that point, I left the Army and was accepted into the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine.

After leaving the Army, I met an Air Force Health Professions recruiter. He told me to apply to the equivalent Air Force program that the Army wouldn’t select me for. As a civilian with a military background, he said I had a much better chance of the AF accepting me for their scholarship program. And they did!

Incidentally, six months later, the Army decided they wanted me as a dentist, too. Yup, TOO late.

I loved my 20+ year dental career in the Air Force. And my twenty years in private practice as a periodontist.



Looking back, chance played a huge role in my life. As did having a mentor (before I knew what that was) and never giving up on following my dreams. Who knew that freezing during an ORI would drastically change my life!

### **Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ Follow your dreams. But realize that it takes determination, persistence, and hard work.
- ✓ Listen and be thankful for mentors.

## **Risk, Reprimand, & Reward As A General's Aide**

**Edwin (David) Selby A-2 29007**

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### **Risk**

In 1972, I was a 24-year-old First Lieutenant assigned as the Executive Officer of B Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 40<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery (“All For One”), Division Artillery, 3d Armored Division, V Corps. We were stationed in Francois Kaserne near Hanau, Germany and I had much to learn about the ways of the world, and particularly the ways of the Army.

One day, I sat reading the local section of the U.S. military news publication *Stars & Stripes* when a news notification caught my eye. The current aide-de-camp was being reassigned due to the arrival of a new Assistant Division Commander (ADC). It popped into my yet-to-be-fully developed brain (that doesn’t happen until age 26, they say) that it would be cool to call the departing aide to ask about what the job entails and how his replacement will be selected.

After a very informative and friendly chat, the outgoing aide asked about my shallow resume and if I’d like to be considered for the position. I said, “Sure!” because the new job would be an improvement over what I had been experiencing at the battery level. During training, I often got lightheaded, inhaling diesel fumes, soaked in hydraulic fluid in freezing weather, and ate massive quantities of dust for weeks at the Grafenwoehr & Hohenfels training areas. Added spice was trying to herd not a few intractable troops high on hashish who were students of the dap and ardent disciples of Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, and Malcolm X. And that didn’t include fragging, the Ruskies and the Baader-Meinhof Gang!

A few days later, I received a surprise call ordering me to appear for an interview with the new ADC, a Brigadier General “S” (BG) for the new aide position. The general was a Class of 1949 graduate and a former English professor at the famous reform school on the Hudson. The interview went splendidly in this naive ingenu’s humble opinion. He told me that others were being interviewed and that “I’m the one in charge here!” DIVARTY Commander “A” (DC) wants his “boy” in the aide-de-camp position to keep an eye on what his new superior might be up to. The BG also told me to keep what he just told me under my hat so word doesn’t leak back to the mighty (ambitious) “I am everywhere!” Colonel “A”.

### **Reprimand**

Not long after my interview, I received another surprise call telling me I was selected and the chain of command would be notified along with my reporting instructions. It wasn’t long until I was ordered to immediately report to the Battalion Commander’s office LTC “B”. There, he asked me, “What the Fxxxk? How did this reassignment happen behind his back?” Worse yet, his boss, the omnipotent Colonel “A” was caught off guard, which was never supposed to happen, and the DIVARTY Commander was extremely pissed!

LTC “B” asked if I had ever heard of the concept of a “chain of command?”. He went on to say the DC directed him to give me a letter of reprimand for my obvious-to-the-casual-observer, ignoble and devious ignorance! Satisfied with the ass-chewing about proper chain of command behavior, LTC “B” handed me the letter.

I thought to myself, *this may have really hurt my career.*

Then my boss surprised me with a wink and a nod before explaining that considering my next assignment and that the letter was going into a temporary file for just a year, he didn’t think it would amount to a hill of beans. Plus, it might even elicit a chuckle or two from those in the know!

Next, I reported as ordered to the Almighty DC for an even more intense ass-chewing, including a warning that I better not screw because “I see and know everything, because I have eyes everywhere, and will know about it before you even commit more faux pas” (plural, as in many).

I left knowing that the DC anticipated I would screw up again, allowing him to punish me for blindsiding him this time and for whatever the next mess entails.

### **Reward**

Finally, I reported as ordered to the new ADC and began a gloriously delightfully marvelous time as an aide, even though I was indeed the only aide ever to almost let my knight be fatally gassed in his mobile command post by a faulty repaired exhaust leak!

So, after two and a half years as an aide, my *curriculum vitae* (resume) became weightier, and I departed to join the 82nd Airborne Division DIVARTY's S-3 shop. There, I was blessed to serve under a future Army Chief of Staff (Gen Vuono) and future Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (General Thurman), and then inexplicably get selected for the Funded Legal Program (FLEP).

Looking back, I know I had much to learn as a young officer and later throughout my life. I was blessed to build a lifelong personal relationship with that humane and patriotic ADC and the rest of his family that continues today!

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Pay better attention in school to military concepts such as the chain of command protocol. Luckily, my aide-de-camp escapade left my head still intact despite clearly having missed that class.

**LL #2:** Always saw the wood in front of you, i.e., do your job. But that doesn't stop you from occasionally looking up to see if all the others around you have moved onwards and upwards and recognize ways to catch up.

**LL #3:** Be bold, but not brash, as boldness and initiative can be recognized and rewarded, especially when one has a pure heart with good intentions, even if fully possessed of *non compos mentis*.

**LL #4:** When opportunities arise, be confident and seize the moment, no matter how far the opportunity is outside your comfort zone. We have an amazing capacity to grow into new positions/responsibilities when we are bold but humble enough to seek the help of those who have gone before us and those above, alongside, and below us in our chain of command.

**LL #5:** No matter what happens along the way, be true to yourself and true to the truth. Always do your best no matter how seemingly trivial the task. And, as my dad taught me - remember to breathe, ride loose in the saddle lest you be thrown off, and be bendable in a strong wind so you don't snap, i.e., accept change and go with the flow.

**LL #6:** Always be kind to and help those around you because it's the right thing to do, and you never know when karma might toss you a lifeline — like the aide who kindly paved the way for me to land the best, most educational, and most career-enhancing job I ever had!

### **Assignment Disappointment**

**Fred Lough G3 28859**

Everyone has plans for their future;. So does the Army. Officers from West Point are trained from their first day to think ahead and plan. Looking ahead and planning includes their own careers. As they approach graduation, branches are selected, and first duty posts are chosen. As they progress, each officer should have a vision of what their next assignment could be and how that will lead to their advancement in the Army.

At some point, almost every officer will face the difficult situation of wanting one assignment, a special job, or post, but “the Army” has a different job in mind. No matter the rank, the needs of the Army supersede.

In my career, I was confronted with an unwanted assignment on more than one occasion. Orders aligned with my view of my career were changed, and I was given a totally different assignment. When this happened, I was frustrated and unhappy and I often expressed my views. My senior officers heard my comments but did not change my orders. I resigned myself to the situation and moved on to my new assignment.

I relay this experience because, looking back, I would not change a thing. The Army was “right.” By following the Army’s orders, opportunities and experiences arose that I could not have anticipated. I benefited immensely by going where I was sent.

I have listened to many other officers that who have had similar experiences. Like me, they had plans for their careers that were changed, and to a person, they would not change anything if they were given the opportunity.

**Lesson Learned:** One should plan for one's future, but don't be too wedded to one's plans. The Army has plans as well. Once orders are given, graciously going forward is often the best course.

### **Assignment Officer Observations**

**David White C-4 29200**

The following observation was gained managing officer assignments and performance evaluation records for three years at Headquarters, Department of the Army.

**Lesson Learned:** An officer's performance evaluation is inversely proportional to the officer's distance from the "flagpole," meaning the command headquarters. In commands where some officers were located physically closer to the headquarters and had more opportunities to be exposed to the commander/rater, those officers generally received higher performance ratings than the officers who were at greater distances from the headquarters and were seen or heard from infrequently or less often. Performance appraisals in these situations appeared to indicate that officers at remote locations needed to develop a method to remain in regular contact with their raters to receive a rating similar to their peers nearer the command headquarters.

### **Blowing Your Own Horn**

**Roger McCormick H-2 29156**

In Army life, good leadership and supervision are expected at all levels. Recognition and praise are not sought out because it is trusted that leaders/supervisors will see and commend initiative that produces good results.

**Lesson Learned:** Unfortunately, that isn't always the case. Whether in Army or civilian life, it does not hurt to bring good initiatives to the boss's attention. Those initiatives may be your own or those of your subordinates who deserve attention. Maybe those good ideas that have been implemented will compensate in the boss's eyes for some other action that didn't turn out so well. Initiative must not be stifled.

## Working for a Bad Commander

Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207

In 1966, alone without family or friends, I stepped off the bus in Highland Falls and walked onto the Academy grounds as an Airborne qualified PFC “Prepster.” My goal was to survive and depart in four years as an Infantry lieutenant. During our Academy years, career management was NOT taught to our class of 1970, other than being told, “Don’t screw up!”

**Lesson Learned #1:** I was unaware that after commissioning I could call up my branch, find my assignments officer, ask him for help about what assignment options were there for my next permanent change of station, and explain to him what type of assignment I’d like to get.

**Lesson Learned #2:** Neither did I not realize HOW the Army routinely prepared officers for increasing line and staff responsibilities. Nor did I know HOW they filled the Army’s different needs in the Pacific and European theaters of operations, as well as filling slots to conduct new ways of warfare.

Did I call branch and ask them what was the best assignment staircase to climb? No, because I didn’t recognize that resource existed.

Hence, like many classmates, I devised my career path. My goal wasn’t to achieve a specific future rank. Instead, I felt if I demonstrated that I could successfully command multiple types of line units, then promotion boards would keep promoting me and sending me to additional schooling.

The first career step down that path was “Branch Night” where we selected our combat arms branch. That was easy, “Infantry!” The next step was selecting our first unit. My dream was snagging an Airborne slot in the 173rd Airborne Brigade Contingency Response Force stationed in Vicenza (northern) Italy. My great-grandparents immigrated from Italy. I’d be with a top-notch unit doing important missions where my ability would be recognized, plus warm weather and beautiful Italian women on the beach. Perfect!

But it didn’t happen. By not being the brightest bulb in our class, I watched Airborne slot after slot go to guys academically smarter than me. Then there was just one slot left, an Airborne company in Fairbanks, Alaska. It was the Army’s northernmost Airborne company conducting winter survival and winter military operations; hundreds of miles away from brigade headquarters in Anchorage.

Unfortunately, 80 classmates were still ahead of me. I used the time to consider whether I should select that slot or another Infantry unit. Was there something better than

nine months of darkness, colder than hell, thick ice stretching from the shore into the freezing Artic seas, and no bikinis? One by one, my classmates voted against going north.

I got it! Happily, it turned out to be a great assignment. Each day ,we faced two enemies — killer weather and dangerous terrain. That included nine months of darkness during the winter of 1971 with forty days of 60 degrees below zero, snowstorms, slippery slopes, freezing cold rivers, dangerous glaciers, and steep rocky mountains. For example, to complete a special DoD mission, the commanding general jumped us onto sea ice in dangerously high winds 209 miles from shore. That's where the ocean's up-and-down waves crack the thick ice and repeatedly shove slabs upright. The white wall I slammed into was twelve feet high. Then, the wind filled my canopy and dragged me away at 35 miles per hour. But I got unclipped from the chute and walked back to the assembly point without any broken bones, just a slashed forehead that would not stop bleeding until the medic wrapped tape around it and ordered me to sit still because I had a concussion.

To me, my plan was working. Some people might even say my ground, air, and space mix, as well as Pacific theater unit experience, was excellent. However, after you scan my assignments and advanced schooling below, I'll explain what I believe kept me from making full colonel.

### **Combined Arms Assignments & Training**

#### ❖ **Ranger School**

- ✓ Mortar Platoon Leader, Company C (**Airborne**), 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry in Fairbanks, **Alaska**
- ✓ Executive Officer, C Company (Airborne), Alaska. Competed and won a slot as one of three junior officers sent from Alaska to Japan's northern forces on a nation-to-nation military exchange program.
- ✓ **Light Infantry** Platoon Leader, **South Korea**
- ✓ Assistant Battalion S-3, South Korea
  
- **Air Cavalry** ground-platoon leader **Ft. Lewis, WA**
- Assistant S-3, **Combined Arms Brigade**, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Ft. Lewis WA
- Company Commander, **Combat Support Company**, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 77<sup>th</sup> **Armor**, Ft. Lewis WA
- Battalion S-3, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 31<sup>st</sup> **Mechanized Infantry**, South Korea (**DMZ**)
  
- Deputy Chief, Battle Management Command & Control Directorate, Army Strategic Defense Command (**National Missile Defense**)

➤ Joint Space Command's first **Space-Ground Operations Analyst**

### **Advanced Schooling**

- ✓ Naval Postgraduate School, Management Degree
- ✓ Armor Officer Advanced Course
- ✓ Command & General Staff College
- ✓ Defense Systems Management College, Ft. Belvoir, VA  
Certified DoD Material Acquisition Manager.
- ✓ Army Fellow, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA

### **Live Fire . . . Oops**

In 1975, I was a captain on the brigade staff at Ft. Lewis, when a replacement evaluator/safety officer was needed to support the annual live-fire testing of the armor battalion's M106 4.2 inch mortar platoon. This was not a coveted task since the platoon's parent Combat Support Company was recognized as the worst company in the 9<sup>th</sup> Division. Since the odds of a mishap were higher than usual, one's career could get dinged. So, a fellow assistant S-3 and I flipped a coin. I lost.



Army M106 Mortar Vehicle – Pinterest photo



The next day, the platoon completed the road march portion of its testing, set up along the edge of the large Yakama Firing Range, and prepared to engage if ordered to. Bothersome was nether the CSC company commander nor the XO followed and observed the platoon's performance. Also troubling was the lackadaisical movement by the Platoon Sergeant and gun crews. To me, the low esteem for the company was warranted.

However, I felt better knowing only one other unit was firing that day. Half a mile away, we could hear a National Guard unit shooting 50-caliber machine guns.

Quickly, I verified the tubes were aligned and pointed in the right direction; I moved behind the center tube and shouted, "Begin live fire testing." With my radio, I ordered the forward observer to "Engage target one!" I wasn't worried about the test because the only thing that the center tube had to do was get a mortar round down range within two minutes of receiving the call for fire.

The fire direction center (FDC) hollered tube elevation and right-left aiming adjustments. Surprising me, the center gun crew jumped into action, echoed the FDC's orders, and hefted the large round over the mouth of the tube, ready to drop it.

But suddenly, the FDC shouted an aiming correction. The tube shifted right. "Ready to drop" sounded, followed by the FDC ordering "Fire." The next sound was the mortar round launching and NOT flying straight ahead into the range. Instead, it exploded in front of the National Guard unit. That triggered me into repeatedly yelling, "Cease fire!"

Five minutes later, the Yakima Range NCO radioed the FDC and began chewing my ass for endangering the NG unit. While the NCO went on yelling, I kept repeating, "Yes, Sergeant." After telling me the NG commander reamed his ass, and then by the brigade sergeant major, he hung up.

I shook my head, knowing what was coming. Sure enough, the field phone rang. A brigade headquarters specialist alerted me that the Brigade Commander was flying out to speak with me.

*Shit, shit, shit! My career is over!*

Since my fate was settled, working would stop my useless worrying. So, I called all the men together, and we discussed what went wrong, corrective training, and actions they would conduct before returning to live fire shooting when we got approval to re-do test 1.

An hour later, I heard the helicopter and went to the landing area, knowing all the men behind me were watching. As the colonel jumped out, his size and determined appearance reminded me of movie star John Wayne. After I saluted, he said, "Let's walk."

*At least he won't relieve me in front of the troops.*

"Mitch, back to back I've had to relieve two Armor officers commanding the Combat Support Company. Now, I'm going to try an Infantry officer. You're the new company commander. I need you to turn this unit around."

*Yes!!!!* "Thank you, Sir. I won't let you down."

"Don't tell anyone about this. I'll let the battalion commander know my decision before I fly back to Ft. Lewis. The Sergeant Major will talk to your 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant. Tomorrow, your troops and the rest of the battalion will learn about you at the change of command ceremony."

"I understand, Sir."

It was well past sunset when the platoon and I rolled into the maintenance yard back at camp. It took another hour to secure everything, meet my new 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant, learn how he handled a drug overdose in another platoon, plus where and what time was the change of command. The First Sergeant also told me I had to attend a company and then a battalion meeting after the ceremony. We agreed that I and the Supply Sergeant would begin inventorying company equipment tomorrow afternoon.

When I felt that the unit was taken care of, I went immediately to the battalion headquarters to report to my new boss.

He was in the operations shed and looked at me with disdain, then chewed me out for being dirty and stinking and not coming to him much earlier. He didn't accept my explanation that I felt it was essential to ensure all vehicles, radios, weapons, and ammunition were accounted for and stored away correctly. He just shook his head and sent me away.

At the change of command, the next day, there was a murmur from the troops when an Infantry officer and stranger marched forward to accept the guidon for their unit. Right after the ceremony, I chaired the company health and welfare fund meeting. Before the semi-annual live fire tank gunnery competition, Battalion asked each unit to donate a set amount of money to purchase awards for high-scoring tank crews.

Every one of the six enlisted men on the committee voted against the donation. During the following discussion, the men angrily explained that the battalion commander only cared about tankers and gunnery. Since arriving, he had repeatedly disrespected CSC's scouts, air defenders, ground radar, and bridge crews. I said, "Fine, I'll make a personal donation."

An hour later, during the weekly commanders meeting the Battalion Commander asked if every company had donated. I replied, “No, but I’ll support the tank companies by paying for my company’s share out of my own pocket.” This time I got my ass chewed in front of the other captains for poor leadership. Our relationship got no better during the subsequent months. I knew I was alone on the task of turning the company around.

That afternoon, while doing a transfer of property inventory, I asked the Supply Sergeant where the two armored vehicle launch bridges were.

“They are in the Division storage yard, sir.”

“Ah . . . why are they there?”

“They are not assembled.”

“You’re kidding right?”

“No, sir.”

I kept my thoughts to myself while I acted like I was reading the inventory list. “I’m not signing for the bridges until I see them.”

*Two company commanders and a battalion commander decide that the division’s fastest means of crossing a fifty-foot gap isn’t needed. The troops are right. The LTC doesn’t care about what’s happening in CSC and doesn’t recognize how he’s hurting other battalions.”*

From that day on, I had two priorities: First, convince the troops that I supported and respected what they did and would shield them from the Battalion Commander. Second, train each of my platoons on how to pass the twice-a-year combat tasks specified in the Army’s Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP).

- ✓ That included having the bridge Platoon Sergeant assemble the bridges so the platoon could take the tests.
- ✓ That included hours and hours of live fire training by the Scouts, forward observers, and mortar platoons, including how to produce and use a ranging diagram.
- ✓ That included teaching the Scouts to increase the number of tracer rounds in the ammo belt from 1 every 7 rounds to 1 in every 5 rounds to significantly improve the shooter’s speed of getting steel on target, while not melting a barrel in the time allocated for the live fire test.

### **Apologizing**

Four months after taking over CSC, the Scouts came up for semi-annual ARTEP testing at Ft. Lewis while the tanks were loading onto rail cars to travel east to the Yakima Firing Range for their maneuver and live fire testing. Forty-eight hours in advance of the

Scout test, we began positioning. First, we inspected that all vehicles were properly loaded, the vehicles were topped off and ran well, and then parked them in line in the motor pool. Similarly, we tested and prepositioned all radios. Next, weapons, belts of machine gun ammo, and boxes of tracer rounds were inspected and locked in the armory to be issued to the soldiers on the day of the test.

The night before testing, I gave them my “You are ready to do well, and I trust you” speech. On the day of the Scout test, they assembled and departed before daylight for their designated assembly area. Just before noon, I watched them arrive at the live fire range. When I asked the Platoon Leader how they did during the first phase, he told me they had the highest maneuver score of all the competitors. But it would be tough doing well during live fire because the Battalion Commander ordered our armorer to turn over all of the tracer ammo to one of the tank companies.

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“One of the tank companies failed to order enough tracer ammunition for their ARTEP.”

I controlled my frigging red-hot emotions and said, “No problem. Each gunner will shoot well because of all the hours of live fire training we put them through. Call me after you roll off the range.”

While he returned to his men and told them about his and my confidence in them, I walked behind the target storage shed where I couldn’t be seen. Then, I began battering the wooden wall with my helmet and kicking it with my boots. *Dumb backstabbing stupid, thoughtless asshole!*

Two hours later, the scout leader told me the platoon had placed second in shooting and second place overall. I thanked him, telephoned the Brigade Commander’s office, and requested five minutes of his time. When he answered the phone, I said, “Sir, when you selected me to command CSC, I promised I would not let you down. However, I have to apologize to you. In today’s Scout testing, we came out first in the maneuver phase but only second in the shooting phase. Which is pretty good given we did it without any tracers to load into our ammo belts.”

Then, the full colonel did what I hoped he would do. “What do you mean no tracer ammo?”

“Oh, one of the tank companies needed more tracer ammo for their ARTEP testing. So, the battalion commander ordered us to give them ours. Which we understand, sir because someday the 77’s tanks might lead this brigade into battle. So, again, Sir, I apologize for letting you down by not taking first place against the other scout platoons.”

“Mitch, thanks for letting me know.”

I hung up the phone knowing, I probably hurt my career, not with the full colonel, but with the Armor asshole. I just didn't know to what degree. An hour later, my battalion commander called my office. "Yes sir, what can I do for you?"

He proceeded to chew my ass for telling his boss that he was the one that caused the brigade to fail winning first place in the Division's Scout Platoon ARTEP. I, of course, told him the truth. "Sir, I did nothing like that. While talking to the Brigade Commander, I took all the blame for my scout platoon's performance. And I definitely never said anything negative about you. He chewed on me some more, then slammed down the phone.

I still smile about how I conveyed to the Brigade Commander the near-sighted stupidity of one of his battalion commanders. And if I could, I wouldn't hesitate a moment to do it again.

I felt then, and still do, that the LTC earned being dinged on his officer efficiency report. Not because he did that to me, but because he was a crappy, narrow-sighted leader, who should have never been promoted to full colonel.

### **OER Impact**

After the Vietnam War ended in March 1973, the Army had more captains and lieutenants than needed. That's why there were many "assistant" Bn and Bde staff officers during 1975. So, the assignments branch was selecting from the best of the best, starting with the highest OER scores. We understood in the brigade that we needed to receive an OER score of 98, 99, or 100. I knew that would be hard for me because there were three tank company commanders that the Bn Cdr would surely rate higher than a dirt dog Infantryman, like me. Plus, I was filling a slot that an armor officer should have while training a bunch of little-value platoons.

The result? I received a 97 and believe the LTC wanted to give me an even lower score, but the Brigade Commander was my "reviewer" and thought highly of me. He knew some of the hurdles I overcame while converting a disheartened, poorly performing unit into a top-notch one. How good were we? Our mortar platoon nearly maxed its semi-annual ARTEP.

However, when I saw the 97 score, I knew it would stop me from ever being a full colonel.

**Lesson Learned #3:** When I received what I thought was a marginal OER, I should have called branch and asked for an assignment officer's opinion. Not opening that door was silly of me.

**Lesson Learned #4:** Keep your word about standing up for your men, even if it may harm your career. When I left my company, I knew the men were far better skilled than when I arrived, that they were proud of themselves, and would have followed me into combat.

## Category: Mentoring

### Wisdom of the First Sergeant

Gilbert (Gil) Harper D-3 29104

As a first lieutenant in command of a truck company in Germany, I was blessed to have the mentorship and tutelage of an experienced First Sergeant, George Ledbetter.

One day, after complaining about one of my young soldiers, 1SG Ledbetter said, “Sir, it’s easy for you to do things right. You are a leader. He’s just a young soldier and still learning.”

Wow! 1SG George Ledbetter, one of the finest soldiers and best men I have ever known, called me a “leader.” I did my best to conceal my excitement, but the more I thought about it, the less proud I became as I realized the first sergeant was not complimenting me but stating an expectation. He set the standard. Beginning that day, I did everything I could to be worthy of his respect.

### NCO Mentoring

Rich St Denis A-4 28830

It is said that the main job of lieutenants is to learn from their NCOs. Fifty years ago, a staff sergeant who was the Chief of Firing Battery for Battery A, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion 14<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, said something that has stuck with me to this day. I have recalled and acted on his advice countless times. I have passed his words on to others: “Sometimes you have to put your mind in neutral.”

What prompted his words? What do they mean? Why do they matter?

It was a long, dusty, bumpy ride on a hot mid-summer day in 1973. Our convoy of M109 Howitzers and support vehicles was slowly lumbering along the dirt tank trails of the Grafenwoehr Training Area in West Germany. After several busy days and nights of live-fire exercises, we were bone-tired and heading back to our base camp from our distant firing positions.

Riding in the lead vehicle, I had it easy compared to the tracked vehicle drivers who were eating dust behind me. But I was hot and tired and said something in frustration about the long, boring, uncomfortable trek. Sitting behind me, my older and wiser right arm, my NCOIC, spoke. “Sometimes, Lieutenant, you have to put your mind in neutral.”

I grinned, relaxed, and rolled with it. Over the years, during frustrating situations, I have remembered and applied that advice and put my mind in neutral to relax and be calm.

Twenty years later, his words took on a deeper meaning as I watched a video featuring Dr. Stephen R. Covey, the brilliant author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. He explained that in a given situation if we are emotionally triggered, we can pause our reaction, buy time, think, and choose our response. We can thus exhibit greater emotional self-control. What Dr. Covey called “response-ability” which is the ability to choose our response.

**Lesson Learned:** As leaders, we must develop an ability to control our unhealthy negative emotions and moods. We must set a good example of mindfulness and emotional self-control. This also improves our decision-making ability during stressful situations. If we put our minds in neutral and remain calm, we can create time and space for our intellect to kick in, weigh our options, and choose more wisely. And, as someone once told me, if we choose well two out of three times, we are world-class. Many decisions are close calls, and we will get some wrong. But then, as General Colin Powell advised, we just have to make another decision and adjust.

Life as a lieutenant and beyond has been, for me, a continuous learning process. As President John F. Kennedy said, “Leadership and learning are inseparable to one another.” So, learn from your NCOs and others at every stage of your career. Learn about matters both big and small. Maybe one day, you will have an opportunity to say to someone feeling stressed, “Sometimes you have to put your mind in neutral.”

**Ask Better Questions**

**John H. Van Vliet E-4 28760**

In 1971, I was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in C Company 2/509<sup>th</sup> Airborne Mechanized Infantry in Mainz, Germany. We had lots on our plates, including a motor pool inspection scheduled for Saturday, just four days away. I was overwhelmed with “additional duties” such as arms room officer, training officer, and NBC officer. So, I instructed my platoon sergeant to prepare the platoon for the motor pool inspection.

On Thursday, I asked the platoon sergeant if the platoon was ready for the inspection. The reply was, “Yes, sir! Airborne, sir!”

On Friday, the company commander asked me if the platoon was ready for Saturday’s inspection. I said, “Yes, sir”. The company commander followed up, asking me what was done to get ready for the inspection. I gulped and stammered. “Uh ... I tasked the platoon sergeant to prepare the platoon.” The commander said, “That was an appropriate step, but what was done?” I had to reply that I did not know. The commander said, “Well, find out!”

I tracked down the platoon sergeant and asked him what had been done. He said the men had swept our part of the motor pool and had ensured the vehicles were clean. When I asked about maintenance checks and other matters, the platoon sergeant said the platoon had been too busy with other duties.

Shocked, I asked the platoon sergeant why he had told me the platoon was ready for inspection. He stood tall and said, “Sir! We’re Airborne. We’re always ready!”

The company commander was not happy with the situation, and my platoon and I worked well into the night to complete the preparations for Saturday’s motor pool inspection. Once we finished, I reported what we had done to the company commander, who asked what I had learned.

**Lesson Learned:** Ask for information, not just opinion. Opinion is important, but it must be backed up with factual information.

### **Trust But Verify**

**John M. Holm C-4 29323**

Three times during my short six years in the Army, I placed too much faith in trust and too little in verify, and it came back to haunt me.

- ❖ A team I entrusted to clean up the company mess equipment in preparation for an Inspector General (IG) inspection failed to dry the pans properly. This resulted in rust forming on the pans, meaning a deficient score in that area. **Lesson Learned:** A simple check would have surfaced this problem.



- ❖ During a different IG inspection, an M16 belonging to a different Battery was discovered in our arms room, and one of our M16s was not. I trusted the Battery armorer to account for all of our weapons since that's his job. **Lesson Learned:** Periodic verification may have alleviated this potentially serious problem.
- ❖ As an aviation company operations officer, I was assigned to ensure all flight records were properly maintained. I left this solely in the hands of the clerks and responsible sergeant. In time, I learned that one of the flight sergeants was drawing flight pay but had not flown the requisite hours. **Lesson Learned:** Closer supervision should have revealed this discrepancy and possible fraud.

### **Bad Mentoring**

**Bruce Galton I-1 28958**

I was running a pistol range as a young Lieutenant. A Squadron staff officer inspected the range. He very loudly and vigorously chewed me out in front of our soldiers. At full volume, he demanded that I set up concurrent training. He was right, and I was humiliated.



Angry officer courtesy of cliker.com

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ Be prepared. Know all the tasks you are responsible for and how to accomplish them. If you have never performed a task, ask an NCO or another officer how to do the task properly.
- ✓ Never correct someone in front of their subordinates.

## **Initiative Without Authorization**

**David White C-4 29200**

One of the admirable traits of the American soldier has always been the willingness of the individual soldier to seize the initiative when required.

As a new first lieutenant in West Germany in 1972, I was a tank battalion maintenance officer and the most junior officer assigned to the battalion staff. My rater, who I was directly responsible to, was the battalion executive officer, a senior major.

During an important battalion tactical field training exercise, the battalion headquarters and trains had been positioned well to the rear of the front lines where our “Blue” forces were engaging the enemy “Red” forces. My battalion maintenance platoon was co-located with the battalion headquarters trains. Following standing procedures, we were briefed on primary and alternate sites where the battalion command post (CP) and trains would be located.

I was away from the battalion maintenance platoon’s location performing my duties when I observed at least a platoon-size enemy armor unit well behind our front lines, moving toward our battalion trains position. I immediately used the command radio network to report what I had seen to help the chain of command respond to and repel the potential threat. Being in an area where communications were not reliable, I was unable to obtain any response to my calls.

I quickly drove ahead of the advancing enemy force to the Battalion CP and trains area. Upon my arrival there, I found no other commissioned officers present. I again radioed to report the threatening situation, but there was no reply.

As the only officer present, unable to obtain contact with any other senior battalion staff officer, and responding to the advancing enemy threat, I ordered the entire battalion CP and trains to break camp and move to the previously designated alternate site, a good distance to the rear of the current location. The battalion CP and trains followed my orders, broke camp, and prepared to move. As we departing from that location, the enemy armor appeared in the distance, advancing toward us.

We successfully moved to the designated alternate site and re-established camp, avoiding the enemy armor formation. Later that afternoon, I successfully communicated on the battalion radio network that the Battalion CP and trains had relocated to the alternate site.

Later that same evening, the battalion executive officer arrived at the new location. He was quite upset that I had moved the Battalion CP without authorization. I attempted to explain that the CP was in imminent danger of being overrun and likely destroyed or

captured. He did not agree with my assessment or my decision to move the Battalion CP. I was severely verbally reprimanded for my independent and unauthorized actions.

To this day, I still believe moving the CP and trains based upon imminent threat was the right course of action for the right reasons.

**Lesson Learned:** Rather than severely reprimanding me, the major should have counseled me on how I might have handled the situation better. With reflection and hindsight, I could have sent several vehicles to more suitable locations to establish communications while we broke camp. If that communication effort had failed, or if the enemy had appeared, I would have still moved the CP and trains.

### **Effective Mentorship**

**Steven Roberts D-2 29178**

Just as the chain of command is an essential factor for military effectiveness, so is the concept of mentorship. In fact, the “Life Experience/Lessons Learned” program of the Class of 1970 is a valuable form of mentorship.

The lesson I offer is that as an officer climbs the ladder of rank and responsibility, he or she must aid and guide the development of those who are junior, especially those first entering the military. In his autobiography, *My American Journey*, Colin Powell writes that as a lieutenant, he lost his .45 caliber pistol and loaded magazine during a field exercise in Germany. Rather than punitive action against him that would have certainly destroyed his career, proper mentorship by a more senior officer bailed him out.

**Lesson Learned:** Effective mentorship to those junior to you aids in their success, and their success adds to the strength and effectiveness of the United States military.

### **Socratic Mentoring**

**Gilbert (Gil) Harper D-3 29104**

I was blessed by many great teachers, each with their own style. MG James Taylor was one of the Army’s training experts. His talent included educating officers.

My Group Commander informed me that the Commanding General was displeased with the physical training in my battalion.

We had a very active program and scored well in all tests and unit endeavors, so I was confused by the feedback. I finally found myself in the CG's office to explain my PT program. General Taylor's style was to ask questions until you got the correct answer. After 30 minutes of grilling, he informed me that I still "didn't get it" and told me to make another appointment. I returned two days later to continue defending my program, and the questioning resumed. I finally reached a point of frustration and said, "Sir, I don't know why I'm explaining this; PT is the primary responsibility of my NCOs." General Taylor gave a rare smile and said, "You can go now."

**Lesson Learned:** Had MG Taylor told me that I was micromanaging my sergeants, I would have given him a quick "Got it, Sir" and made some band-aid changes. But his use of the Socratic Method resulted in me "really getting it." As with most generals, his time was limited. I believe his investment served me and the Army well in future assignments.

### **Tell Me More**

**Richard St. Denis A-4 28830**

When caught unexpectedly by a threatening situation, it is normal to have a fight, flight, or freeze reaction. Our emotional system is designed for one of those three reflexive reactions to uncertainty, danger, and other negative triggers. Sometimes, a fight, flight, or freeze reaction is effective. Sometimes it is not. Indeed, military leaders in combat or even business leaders in challenging circumstances cannot afford to respond poorly with any of these reactions.

What is your tendency? I am wired for a freeze reaction. I tend to lock up, clam up, and stay silent when facing a threatening situation. For example, when I was young, if suddenly criticized by someone, I'd freeze, be tongue-tied, and unsure about what to say. Thus, I tended to stay silent. While this kept me from saying the wrong thing, it made me appear unresponsive, prone to avoid conflict, and defensive during conversations.

Unfortunately, this tendency continued into adulthood. I was not skilled at handling emotional eruptions in others when serving in leadership or teamwork roles.

**Lesson Learned:** Decades ago, while attending a presentation skills workshop, I learned four words to handle an impromptu speaking request: "Interesting! Tell me more." That simple phrase kept the other person talking, slowed things down for me, and allowed me to listen carefully and think before I had to speak.

Later, I realized those words also work well when facing unexpected criticism and intense conflict. “That’s interesting you feel that way. Tell me more.” It buys me time to achieve better emotional self-control and respond more thoughtfully. It also projects an eagerness to listen and avoids the appearance of defensiveness. It has been a game-changer for me.

For twenty years, I have taught these words in workshops about public speaking, listening, dealing with conflict, leadership, and emotional intelligence. In class, we practice using this response. Initially, we do practice drills and later in truly impromptu situations. Repeated practice is the key to getting the response to take hold.

Former students have told me of using this phrase in real-time at work, at a meeting, on the phone, when coaching, when facing resistance, or during a dispute. Some people have said they used it at home during difficult conversations with their spouse or children.

In late 2022, the five-time best-selling author Dan Pink posted a two-minute videocast offering three simple words for handling challenging communication situations. His [Pinkcast 4.27](#), podcast covers “how to avoid overreacting to ugly problems and annoying complaints.” I recommend it. I bet you can guess what these three words are.

## **Senior Officer Mentoring**

**William (Corky) Bruce H-2 29136**

Here are a few short anecdotes garnered from six officers I served with during my Army career that have stood me in good stead and may be of use to those who follow in the Long Grey Line.

### **Lessons Learned**

#### **LL #1: Integrity and the Cadet Honor Code must be your hallmark.**

Lieutenant Colonel Hardy R. Stone, Commander, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, was my second battalion commander. He continually impressed upon his junior officers that honesty was the most critical leadership trait.

I kept up with him, over time; years later, he told me a surprising story. He was in his third year at the Academy in August 1951 when 90 cadets, many from the football team, were dismissed over cheating on exams and violating the Academy’s honor code. Three weeks after the infamous cheating scandal was over, all disciplinary actions finished, and

the investigation closed, Cadet Stone Class of '52 self-reported himself. Though he had not been one of the cheaters, he was on the football team and knew that his roommate had cheated.

The “old” Honor Code stated, “A Cadet does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.” He knew that by reporting himself, he would be dismissed, and he was. Eventually, he was commissioned through Army ROTC, had a distinguished career, and is the most honorable man I have ever known.

**LL #2: Nothing should detract from having the maximum number of soldiers (boots on the ground) present for training.**

Colonel John Cavedo was the Division Artillery Commander, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized), when I reported for duty as his new S3 operations officer. He did not mince words telling me that boots on the ground were always to be one of my top considerations, in training and field operations.

Shortly afterward, I watched him go to war with the post facility managers because many soldiers were missing training to accomplish non-mission activities. For example, when he started pushing for changes, the post office, Red Cross, travel section, finance, Army Emergency Relief, and the ID card section – just to mention a few offices – were closed during lunch. That policy forced soldiers to miss some or all of their morning or afternoon training. He succeeded in changing that policy.

With fewer non-mission disruptions, we had more boots on the ground during mission training, teamwork improved, and we were doing what we were charged to do as leaders.

Years later, when I became a battalion commander, I found a similar disruptive situation in Neu Ulm, Germany. There, I was able to do the same thing. Not only ensuring the maximum boots on the ground, but also taking care of the troops.

**LL #3: Leadership by Walking Around (LBWA) is effective.**

At the Pre-Command Course for new battalion commanders, General “Butch” Saint, Commanding General of the U.S. Army, Europe, gave a two-hour leadership seminar. The general included lots of relevant, usable, common-sense leadership gems.

The one tip I later used most often in my battalion was LBWA. Meaning, that a leader should see and be seen at every training, operations, and staff venue. (Doing paperwork in your office does not count.) For example, sit in on section training, crawl up on a howitzer with the gun chief, have a cup of coffee with a supply sergeant in his office, eat meals in the mess hall, and help sort packages in the mail room.

When doing these things, ask questions like, “What kind of breech block is that, soldier?” (You do not even have to know that it is an interrupted step-threaded screw type. But you can be assured that within a couple of days, the rest of your unit will have heard and will know the answer.)

#### **LL #4: Perfection Is the enemy of good enough.**

As a battalion commander in the Big Red One (Forward), my boss and classmate was Steve Wesbrook and the best brigade-level commander I ever worked for. His boss was Brigadier General William J. Mullen, Commanding General 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (Forward)

The general was recognized throughout the Army’s senior leadership as the subject matter expert on all matters of training. Thus, he was always brought in to speak to the two- and three-stars at leadership and training conferences.

He taught us, to always do our very best, but based on time and resource constraints, perfection is the enemy of good enough. Instead, get it done on time and to the best of your ability. However, sometimes, perfection must be the standard and must be met. This philosophy has served me well throughout my military and civilian careers.

#### **LL #5: Motivate by example.**

Our boss in the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (Forward) was Lieutenant General Fred Franks, Commanding General U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Corps.

He was a great Corps Commander in peacetime and combat who was also the epitome of motivation by example. He lost a leg in Vietnam and was to be medically boarded out of the Army. But he would not have any part of it. He appealed the decision and proved that he could perform all physical requirements with his prosthetic leg. Eventually, he won and was reinstated to active duty.

I have seen him run over broken ground and climb onto his tank without assistance. I can only imagine the pain and effort necessary to do that. If his example of leadership by example does not motivate, I do not know what would.

### **LL #6: Hope is Not a Method.**

When I worked in the Office of the Chief, I sometimes had to brief General Gordon Sullivan, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, on sensitive activities that involved Army units and troops. General Sullivan's mantra was "Hope is Not a Method." It is even the title of one of his books.

Never leave anything to chance when conducting military operations or putting soldiers in harm's way. Contingency plans, backup scenarios, and alternative solutions need every detail considered, analyzed, and planned for.

At one classified briefing, I told him that 'something' would occur. He asked, "What if that 'something' goes badly?" My mouth engaged before brain, and I stated, "General, we hope that doesn't happen..." He looked up, and I knew I was about to get both barrels of the mantra.

Brain engaged, and I blurted, "... but we have considered that and have the following plan to ensure the mission will be completed." It's a little humorous now, but not at the time. That incident reinforced the absolute necessity in military and civilian endeavors to do your homework.

### **LL #7: Duty, Honor, Country.**

Nothing else is needed here to explain, clarify, or justify this tenet of leadership.

## **Mentoring Limit**

**Steve Homoleski D-1 29013**

The law classes cadets take at West Point are very important! As a platoon leader in Germany, I spent many hours counseling my young soldiers about legal matters. I helped them understand sometimes misleading contracts, talked with debt collection agencies, and arranged payment schedules.



**Lesson Learned:** Giving advice and support is important but there are limits. For example, co-signing a loan can lead to a myriad of problems. If asked to co-sign respectfully decline!

## Category: Communicating & Listening

### Leadership by Walking Around

William Lane C-4 28926

Leaders can't lead from behind a desk! Leaders must be present to assess the situation and provide the appropriate leadership right then and there.

That's an old cliché that I and others have repeatedly learned. But it is worth reiterating - because it works.

Throughout my career in the military and civilian positions, I learned that effective leaders must be present at the critical point of activity. Further, leaders can only assess the readiness and ability of their organization to perform its stated missions or activities if they are fully informed. This knowledge can **only** be gained by being away from one's desk and present during organizational activity. Further, it gives the commander the opportunity to:

- Commend soldiers/employees for the work that they do
- Identify problem areas to rectify,
- Ensure that directions/policies/guidance are being followed or implemented,
- Assess real-time progress on assigned activities
- Provide on the scene leadership.

This characteristic of good leaders has been repeatedly illustrated and exemplified over my career. Three military and one civilian examples of this are given below.

During my junior officer days, I had the privilege and good fortune to serve as an Aide-de-Camp for a General Officer in a tactical unit. My boss was the Assistant Division Commander in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. His approach to his duties was simple. He wanted

to know as much about the condition of the units in the division as he could, and he could not do that by sitting and reading reports in his office. So, he spent most of his time visiting garrison units and field training. There, he learned the unit's strengths and weaknesses, including its personnel, equipment, and training. It was invaluable!

The second time was while this same General Officer was assigned as Chief of the Army Section of the military aid mission in Turkey. He felt it was incumbent to know as much about the Turkish Army as possible to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. That way, he could effectively evaluate their needs and assess the best aid package. He could only accomplish this task by traveling throughout the country and visiting as many elements of the Turkish Army as he could. He could not do so by sitting in his office and reading inadequate reports from Turkish Army Headquarters that often didn't present an accurate or complete picture.

The third example is from my company command duties in Korea. It is critical for a commander to be out of the office and present with the separate elements of his/her company in the garrison and at deployment locations. It is the only way for the commander and leader to assess unit activities, identify problems, and ensure that the unit performs to its maximum. During one quarterly deployment alert, the Brigade Signal Officer inspected deployment activities and unit deployments just as I did. It turned out that I was present at each unit deployment location before and during his visits, much to his surprise!

The fourth example is from the commercial world and my experience in a government agency. At the time, part of the agency I worked for was involved in emergency response activities and disaster recovery activities. It turned out that the accuracy of reports sent to the agency by commercial entities required to report their status during an emergency was suspect. As a result, it became necessary to initiate an effort to deploy a member of the agency staff into the disaster area who could provide accurate and timely reports and provide on-the-scene coordination between the government agency and the commercial service providers. This was done beginning with Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and subsequent major disasters nationwide. Again, these were situations where leading from behind a desk was inadequate.

**Lesson Learned:** In sum, I learned that effective leadership can only be accomplished by proactive leaders who lead by their presence.

**RA RA Management**

**Patrick (Pat) Thornton D-2 28875**

I used to say I wasn't a back slapper or cheerleader, but this was my "RA RA" command/management philosophy.

R - Assign **Responsibility** for the mission/task.

A - Delegate the appropriate **Authority** to accomplish.

R - Provide the necessary **Resources** to accomplish.

A - Hold **Accountable**.

It's simple. Successful use of "RA RA" unleashes innovation and imagination, and it results in success and high morale. Clearly assigning responsibility, delegating authority, and providing resources allows you to fairly hold someone accountable. The two most common mistakes are withholding either authority or resources and then holding someone accountable. That approach results in failure and resentment.

## **Foundations Of Sound Leadership**

**John Beasley F-1 29310**

### **Six Lessons Learned**

**LL #1** Saying "thanks" or "well done" is something every leader should do regularly.

**LL #2** We all make mistakes, so recognize that fact before you are quick to judge others.

**LL #3** As a leader, you're wise to listen to all opinions and ideas BEFORE making a decision. Early decisions kill productive discussions and often lead to poor results.

**LL #4** Don't be afraid to promptly change a decision when you realize it's wrong — bad decisions don't improve with time.

**LL #5** Lead by example. When you set the standard, your soldiers understand what is expected of them.

**LL #6** Your NCOs need your support, guidance, and encouragement. Focus your attention on making them excellent leaders.

### **Listen and Confirm**

**James (Fred ) Valliere I-4 29037**

I have two leadership-related experiences from the late 1980s when I was a Department of the Army (DA) civilian in Germany. Both are from old soldiers with much more experience than myself.

The first lesson came from a retired Master Sergeant (MSG) who worked for me as a civilian Test Control Officer. He had a very strong accent, and one day, he said while pointing to his head, "It's all different in there."

I didn't know what he meant, so I asked him to explain. His theory was that every individual has a separate thought process and understands the spoken word differently. The challenge to the leader is to get each person to understand what is expected of them to accomplish the organizational mission.

The leader must communicate so that all understand their part. That might require repetition, restatement in different terms, questioning, or any other technique that works.

**Lesson Learned:** Just giving orders is insufficient. I wish that we had learned that as cadets.

The second lesson came from the commanding general when I was a plans officer at a 3-star headquarters. My duties included attending staff meetings in case questions arose in the plans area. I cannot remember what the particular subject of the meeting was, but near the end of the meeting, the CG started talking to the staff about the importance for a leader to listen, especially to subordinates.

He provided an example about a subordinate commander who irritated him by wandering all over the place as he talked. He said, and I paraphrase, 'I know he believes he has something to tell me that is important enough to take my time. But I have to work especially hard to understand what he wants to tell me. If he thinks it's important, I ought to listen and learn.'

Again, another leadership trait I wish I had learned when I was twenty years younger.

**Lesson Learned:** Because of those few words from a retired MSG and a 57-year-old LTG, I have tried to listen harder to understand what others are thinking in all my roles as a follower, coworker, and leader.

### **Listen First**

**Paul Passaro F-2 29133**

Listen more than talk. When speaking with a subordinate (or anyone, for that matter), never glance away from him to another person (friend) who comes into view – as you have just disrespected that subordinate and told him that he or she doesn't matter as much as your friend.



I hear you

### **Two Parts of Communication**

**Lawrence (Larry) White I-4 29005**

Communicating well consists of two parts: expressing yourself and listening to others. Too many people forget the second part when it should come first. It's the most critical aspect of respect for others, and you learn a lot more when you're listening than when you're on push-to-talk. Listening is a skill that can be improved with study and practice.

When I was a Tactical Officer (Tac) at USMA (1979-1981), the Commandant of Cadets made me attend a one-week seminar on listening conducted at Michigan State University by a professor named Norm Kagan - [biography](#). Norm created "Interpersonal Process Recall," a series of instructional techniques to improve listening skills as the basis to enhance interpersonal communications. It was the most valuable educational week of my life.

**Lesson Learned:** Listening is critically essential and takes effort. Formal and informal instruction in listening is far less available than those for speaking and writing, but they are out there and well worth finding. As a simple rule of thumb, give this a try. After a conversation with someone, think back. During the conversation, who learned the most about the other? Who made the most statements? Who asked the most questions? Who was listening? Who was talking? Were **you** listening or not? Unfortunately, we are often too busy talking and not listening. We can and should do better.

### **Eye Movement**

**Greg Holton F-3 28815**

Rolling your eyes is never an acceptable response to a military order, no matter how ridiculous you perceive it to be.

### **Good and Bad Optics**

**Scott Bailey F-1 28806**

In 1976, I was a brigade adjutant at Fort Carson as a new captain. One night, as duty officer I received a call from the Provost Marshal's (PM) office that one of our senior NCOs had been stopped for "driving under the influence" on the post.

I knew the NCO from a previous assignment when he worked for a good friend of mine. I went to the PM's office to see if we could handle the matter internally. It was late at night, and the NCOIC was happy to turn him over to me. My plan was to let the brigade commander and the NCO's company commander know the situation first thing in the morning.

Before I could do that, the brigade commander called me in for a good chewing out. It seemed that the provost marshal had called him before I did, explained what a big favor he had done for the brigade commander, and expected payback at a later date. The PM was sure (or just wanted to assume) that I was acting at the behest of the brigade commander. Luckily, the chewing ended without lasting repercussions, and the NCO did not repeat his offense.

**Lesson Learned:** Understand and consider the optics of your course of action before doing it. I could and should have notified the NCOIC that I was acting on my own in my

capacity as the Brigade Duty Officer and not on the orders of anyone. Plus, I would inform the chain of command in the morning of the DUI incident, leaving it up to the chain of command to determine if Article 15 punishment would be levied.

## Empathy

### Anonymous Classmate1 A001

One of my toughest challenges in command was when the spouse of one of my soldiers accused a chaplain of improper behavior. The chaplain was not in my unit, so I addressed the issue to the proper chain of command.

The Commanding General took immediate, appropriate action. I informed the spouse, but she would not accept my assurances and threatened to go to the press. I conveyed this concern to the CG, who then visited the woman in person. I watched as he gently but firmly explained that he had taken appropriate action, that authorities in the Army and in the chaplain's church had been informed, and the individual was being reassigned with prejudice. He then said, "I have given this incident great thought, I have made a good decision, and I have given you the courtesy of explaining it in person. I will not justify it further."

This statement was well presented and appeared well received, but what impressed me was what the CG did next. **Lesson Learned:** He spoke to this woman as if she was his daughter. He talked about how disappointing this must be for her, and while her faith may be shaken, she should not let it be broken. It was obvious that he felt great compassion for the soldier's wife and responsibility for how someone in his command had not served her well.

Years later, I was faced with a similar situation involving an allegation by a soldier's spouse against a senior officer. The previous lesson served me well.

## "Do" Orders

### Tom Gerard I-4 28762

During a challenging training mission, the battalion commander provided me these words of wisdom. "Soldiers will do whatever you require them to do."

Over the years, I found the best way is to lead and share in the task. Another approach is to let the sergeants work with the soldiers. The third is to personally explain to the soldiers the mission's importance and why they need to do it. The bottom line is that soldiers will do what they are required to do.

### **Seven Leadership Lessons**

**James L. Mowery F-4 29356**

I joined the Army as an enlisted infantryman in October 1964. In 1965, I was a soldier in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 325 Infantry (Airborne), when I learned I was accepted to attend the USMA Prep School for a year. There, I qualified to go to West Point, graduating with the Class of 1970.

In the coming years, I repeatedly served in combat and security operations, including the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Korea, and Germany. My awards include the Combat Infantry, Master Parachutist, Master Aviator, and Pathfinder Badges; Ranger Tab (Distinguished graduate of my class), the Distinguished Service Medal; two Defense Superior Service Medals; two Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross; five Bronze Stars two for valor, Air Medal for Valor, Army Commendation Medal for Valor, and the Purple Heart. The lessons below were drawn from service throughout my career. I provide them so the reader does not have to learn them the hard way, as I did.



Colonel Mowery: A Highly Decorated Officer



## Lessons Learned

**LL #1:** Your Soldiers are as valuable as your sons and daughters. Their Mothers and Fathers entrusted you with their lives. Never, ever forget that.



Colonel Mowery With Russian Soldiers In Bosnia

**LL #2:** Your three choices when given an order

- Obey it.
- Argue your point, but execute if your leader disagrees.
- Refuse the order, but be prepared for the consequences. So, pick your battles wisely, as refusing an order could lead to your termination.



Mowery Coordinating With Another Officer in Bosnia

**LL # 3:** Be careful of your words in all situations, both social and professional.

- ✓ People want to satisfy their leaders. If you say something in jest, do not be surprised if someone does it.
- ✓ Words can hurt as bad as a bullet. Praise publicly, scold privately.

**LL # 4:** Read the “One Minute Manager”:

- Point 1: Never scold someone who is learning.
- Point 2: Walk around looking for people doing something right.
- Point 3: If someone must be scolded, do it privately and find something good to say about them before you leave.

**LL # 5:** Be Positive

- ✓ There is no easy button: when things are difficult, frustration raises its head.
- ✓ When people are concerned that they might fail, you must be positive.
- ✓ They want to please you, and will share in your demeanor.



Colonel Mowery in Somalia

**LL #6:** Integrity— never quibble, fabricate, or lie.

- Truth wins.
- Being less than truthful will always come out, and when it does, trust is broken. Then, you have no more value to your organization.

**LL #7:** Your life does not matter. Theirs does. Train your subordinates to take over in stride.

### **Choose Your Words Wisely**

**Michael Hobson B-4 29442**

During the final phase of rotary wing flight training at Fort Rucker in 1972, student pilots practiced low-level flight exercises to develop navigation skills. With two students per teacher, instructors would teach a lesson in the aircraft with the students, and the following day those students would practice that same lesson without an instructor.



Student Pilots Perform Coordinated Approach and Landing  
Courtesy Defense Visual Information Distribution Service

One afternoon, my instructor was at the controls, teaching us when a disturbing radio call came in from flight operations. A student-only crew had just reported that hunters had shot at their UH-1. Flight operations provided the ground coordinates of the incident and requested the instructor aircraft closest to that area to investigate. My instructor answered the call and told flight ops he was changing course to check out the location.

For background, it was a practice for student pilots to use call signs originating from their instructor's. My instructor was Blue Fox 24, so his two students were assigned call signs Fox 24 Alpha and Fox 24 Bravo (my stick-mate). The terrain we were flying over was mostly flat and pine-forested.

Arriving at the reported location, we observed two pickup trucks parked nose to nose on a dirt road with five or six people standing around. Some were holding rifles or shotguns. As we circled the area, one of the men on the ground ran down the road and started waving his arms out and down as if to guide us to land on the road. My instructor called operations, "This is Fox 24; we are at the location and see hunters gathered around two trucks. There appear to be a lot of empty beer cans on the ground." Operations then instructed Fox 24 to see if he could identify any license plate numbers to report. He replied, that he would land and approach the vehicles to do that.

Fox 24 wheeled our Huey around and aligned our approach with the lone hunter on the road. The hunter appeared to be reliving his days of signaling helicopters to land in Vietnam as settled the aircraft on the roadbed. Leaving the Huey running, the instructor turned the controls over to me in the co-pilot seat and said to me over the intercom, "24 Alpha, you take over radio duty." He then removed his helmet, opened his door, and stepped down. 24 Bravo and I watched our instructor walk toward the two vehicles. The gun-toting hunters had formed a reception party to greet him.

In my opinion, there didn't seem to be any threat at this time. The hunters were waving and calling to our instructor as he drew nearer and appeared happy to have this unexpected diversion to their afternoon beer call. After a few minutes, I heard operations call on our radio, "Fox 24, what is the situation?" I keyed the mic and responded, "This is Fox 24 Alpha, Fox 24 is with the hunters now. They look pretty docile."

My message turned into a BIG mistake! Whoever handling the switch at operations immediately made a call out to everyone, "Fox 24 Alpha says the hunters look pretty hostile." Try as I might, I could not deliver a correction on the radio for my misunderstood message. From what I could hear in the chatter, it was apparent that local authorities would soon be alerted. After a few frantic minutes, I finally broke in on the excited babble and reported that I had said: "docile, not hostile."

The incident ended with our instructor revving up the aircraft for takeoff. He'd been unable to obtain the license plate numbers due to the tailgates being lowered. He flew our Huey back to Rucker, and upon arrival, I was given a special post-flight dressing down by a department head who told me to "never use a two-dollar word like 'docile' on the radio."

**Lesson Learned:** Words that sound alike can be quickly misunderstood.

## Being Direct

Lawrence (Larry) White I-4 29005

I learned this the hard way. Never have a bad thing to say about somebody that you are not prepared to tell it to their face – ahead of time. It's easy to criticize others. We all do it occasionally, especially in environments where others agree, and there is certainly a lot out there about which to be critical.

But if you're not prepared to say those things directly to the individual concerned ahead of time, you're a chickenshit. Have the guts to personally confront those you are prepared to criticize as a prerequisite to doing so in absentia. Confrontation might be uncomfortable, but it's the harder right thing to do. Face to face provides an opportunity to better understand the individual you're about to criticize since there's an opportunity for some back and forth, but that's not always administratively possible. Next would be a phone call. Written correspondence is a poor choice, but better than none, and you should always allow the recipient to respond. Email is possible, but in my experience, it sows more ill will than good. Tweets are in the chickenshit category; don't even go there.

**Lesson Learned:** Better in every regard, look first for the good in others, and cut down on critical comments. If we'd look for it, there's a lot of good out there.

## Communicating to Civilians

Gilbert (Gil) Harper D-3 29104

Sometime in the 1990s, I sat on an airplane next to an aging hippie, i.e., my age. Her tie-dye dress, straight hair, and lack of makeup were clues that she had been and was still trying to be a hippie.

After some polite conversation about her career as a librarian, she asked what I did. I answered that I was a soldier. She then asked me what I had done as a soldier. I believe she was expecting some war stories. Since I didn't have any, I told her about running Medical Readiness Exercises in Latin America, where we provided humanitarian service to isolated villages. I told her about securing supply lines to feeding centers in Somalia and deploying water purification units to Rwanda to fight a cholera epidemic. I described how our young soldiers would interact with local villages in foreign countries and how well they represented the United States.

She listened with unexpected attention, and when I finished, she said, “I’ve demonstrated against the military my whole life, and now I learn that you have done what I always wanted to do.” It took an aging hippie to make me appreciate how well our Army and young soldiers serve our great nation.

Years later, I visited my hometown to support the local recruiter. I was taken to the high school, where I expected to talk to two or three potential recruits. Instead, I was led to the school auditorium, where I faced over 300 students.

I hadn’t prepared any remarks and used the few seconds while the principal introduced me to develop a mental outline. I started by saying that by the time my unit arrived in Somalia, half of all the children aged six and under had died. A stage whisper loud enough for everyone to hear said, “So you killed all the rest.” This speech was not starting well.

The principal and other staff members leaped to confront the mystery voice, but I retained the stage by replying, “No, that’s not what we did. Let me tell you what we did.” I then told them stories about young soldiers who left the security of family and home to deploy halfway around the world to ensure starving families had access to feeding centers. I told them about a specialist who started a school in Somalia and trained Somalis to continue running the school after we redeployed. I informed them about two young soldiers who built a playground their free time to keep the children off the streets and out of danger. I told them about a sergeant who, in three months, got the water flowing in Mogadishu after the UN said it would take two years. I described how young soldiers provided medical and other services to remote villages in Latin America.

I concluded my talk with over 600 eyes glued to me as I told the students that every act I had just related was performed by someone only a few years older than they were. Yes, the Army’s primary mission is to fight and win the nation’s wars, but we do more. People worldwide are better for our engagements on and off the battlefield.

**Lesson Learned:** These and similar incidents taught me that the best way to explain the service and value of our Army to a civilian audience is by talking about our young soldiers, modern-day knights not in shining armor.

### **Silent Professionalism**

**Robert Pantier F-4 29021**

I worked extensively with the Ranger Regiment and other special operations units before, during, and after Operation Just Cause. There was no boasting or bragging by

them. Just silently doing their job and keeping out of the spotlight. Actions speak louder than words.

## **Category: Organization**

### **Org Chart vs. Rating Scheme**

**Lawrence (Larry) White I-4 29005**

In any outfit, closely compare the organization chart and the rating scheme. They are important.

The chart describes how an organization is supposed to work. If the rating scheme matches the org chart, that's a good thing and an encouraging sign. But that's not always the case.

When the rating scheme is different than the outlined organization, there's a chance that something is amiss, and it's worth your time to figure it out. Often it is favoritism, prejudice, or politics of some kind.

This is relatively easy to figure out in a military outfit but can be exceedingly difficult in a civilian organization or a business endeavor where who gets hired, transferred, promoted, and fired can sometimes be tough to figure out.

### **Integrating Women into the Army**

**David White C-4 29200**

In 1975, the Army decided to disestablished the Women's Army Corps (WAC) to integrate women into the mainstream Army. Subsequently, the Corps ceased its colors (ended) in 1978.

When the integration began, I was commanding a maintenance company in a non-divisional battalion at Fort Meade, Maryland. The company had an assigned strength of

380, of which 50 were women. The women had Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) as clerks, cooks, and mechanics.

Integration of the women into my company caused a lot of “growing pains.” Initially, the senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) treated the women more like their daughters than soldiers. Additionally, some female mechanics were not strong enough to lift and carry their toolboxes in the work areas or move the large equipment. Male soldiers, including NCOs, carried female soldiers’ toolboxes or helped them complete tasks they were physically unable to perform. The chain of command conducted many sessions reinforcing that women should be treated as soldiers.

After a brief period, several soldiers in the company married each other. Astonishingly, before one field training exercise, several married couples requested to share a pup tent in the field with their spouse rather than remain with their platoon. The requests were denied.

The company was subsequently selected to be a part of the Army's “Max WAC” evaluation in 1976 to determine the correct number and MOS mix for women in different types of units. Evaluators monitored activities in the company throughout the year.

One situation did not go over well with the evaluators. At that time, whenever a female soldier became pregnant, they were discharged from the Army. Because we were a non-divisional company, we were authorized our own company headquarters administrative staff:

- A legal clerk
- A morning report clerk
- A SIDPERS (Personnel) clerk
- A records clerk.

Unfortunately, all of these clerks were in one-person-deep, critical positions.

After about a month or so, the female SIDPERS clerk became pregnant, and was discharged from the Army. Unfortunately, within a few months, her female replacement became pregnant and was also discharged. I assigned a man to the SIDPERS position, and he served in that position for the remainder of my time in command.

**Lesson Learned:** I told the Max WAC evaluator I would never again place a woman in one of my critical positions. The evaluator did not respond positively to my comments. Fortunately, the Army later changed the policy so women were not automatically discharged upon becoming pregnant.



## Category: Discipline

### Junior Officer Anger

John Beasley F-1 29310

In 1971, I was a Second Lieutenant at Fort Bragg as an infantry platoon leader in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. It was a “required assignment” before the Army would allow new lieutenants like me to deploy to Vietnam.

In the mornings, the Battalion ran a few miles in formation, then cleaned up, and hit the mess hall before the regular work day began. Nearly every morning, a young soldier recently back from an assignment in Vietnam — I’ll call him Private Smith — would drop out of the run after a few hundred yards.

He was not in my platoon, but I took it upon myself to confront him one morning after he once again dropped out of the run. I was angry and his attitude was poor. So, I told him we should go out behind the motor pool and settle matters.

We did. We faced off in a small clearing in the woods ready to fight it out. He came at me with a mad rush but tripped and yelled out in pain when he crashed into the ground. He grabbed his upper arm, and I escorted him to the aid station. It turned out he broke his arm.

Word of all this got out quickly. Before I knew it, I was summoned to see the Battalion commander. I explained what happened. But the Lieutenant Colonel made it clear that he thought Smith’s injury wasn’t just a fall. He told me that he agreed that Smith deserved what he got but that I was pretty stupid to risk my career doing something dumb like fighting with a soldier.

**Lesson Learned:** Looking back, I handled the situation poorly. I should have gone to Smith’s platoon leader rather than confront him. Plus, I lost my temper; that’s never a smart thing to do.

On a somewhat humorous note, Smith and I told the truth about what happened, but no one believed either of us. And with the broken arm, Smith was excused from the runs. But I was a hero with the senior NCOs who didn’t hold Smith in high regard.

## **Schofield Was Right**

**Edwin K (EK) Smith H-1 28846**

Schofield's Definition of Discipline, addressed to the Corps of Cadets on August 11, 1879, still applies today.

“The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army. It is possible to impart instruction and to give commands in such a manner and such a tone of voice to inspire in the soldier no feeling but an intense desire to obey, while the opposite manner and tone of voice cannot fail to excite strong resentment and a desire to disobey. The one mode or the other of dealing with subordinates springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander. He who feels the respect which is due to others cannot fail to inspire in them regard for himself, while he who feels, and hence manifests, disrespect toward others, especially his inferiors, cannot fail to inspire hatred against himself.”

## **Bad Decisions**

**Robert Pantier F-4 29021**

I have seen more careers ruined by improper use of alcohol, drug use, misappropriation of government funds, and inappropriate conduct with the opposite sex. This includes general officers.

## **Drug Abuse and Peer Groups**

**David White C-4 29200**

As the Vietnam War was winding down in the early 1970s, illegal drug abuse was rampant throughout many parts of the Army. It was especially prevalent in some units when I arrived in West Germany as a new platoon leader in a tank company. Many of our soldiers were openly and blatantly using illegal drugs in the barracks. The smell of marijuana or hashish in the barracks in the evening was evident.

The chain of command tried many things to stop the drug abuse in the barracks including,

- Appeals to the soldiers.

- Threatened and implemented disciplinary actions against identified and suspected users.
- Removed doors from individual soldier barracks rooms so they had no privacy.
- Performed unannounced “Health and Welfare” inspections.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Nothing seemed to work, so we started a “drug abuse council” of soldiers and non-commissioned officers to develop solutions to the problem. After initially appearing to be a positive step, the council became misdirected. Unfortunately, the drug abuse council became an after-taps vigilante committee that targeted and physically abused some soldiers. We responded to the situation and immediately disbanded the drug abuse council.

**LL #2:** Subsequently, we identified a solution that worked. We took action to disrupt the soldier peer group.

In my tank company, we reassigned soldiers who were known drug users to rooms with soldiers who were not drug users. We always ensured the non-drug-using soldiers were bigger and stronger and outnumbered the soldiers who were drug users. None of the soldiers were happy about this arrangement, but they complied. The result was immediate and positive. Drugs were eliminated from the barracks. If the drug-abusing soldiers continued their abuse, it would no longer be done in our barracks.

After almost three years in the tank company, I transferred from Armor to Ordnance, and I was reassigned to a maintenance company on a different *kaserne* (post) on the other side of the city. I was assigned as a maintenance platoon leader for over 100 soldiers. When I arrived, it was like returning to the drug situation in the tank company I had helped clean up. Illegal drug abuse was rampant. The previous platoon leader had been attacked and severely beaten one evening by some drug-abusing soldiers, and he was enroute to the States for medical treatment.

I met with the non-commissioned officers to obtain their feedback and recommendations on the morale, discipline, readiness, and overall state of the platoon.

After considering their input, I wasted no time with any alternative actions. I told them we would implement the same technique that worked in my former tank company. I further ordered them to place the drug ring leaders with the biggest and toughest non-

drug-using soldiers. When they returned with the new room assignments, I instructed them to execute the changes.

Again, the response was immediate. The next day, 20 soldiers appealed to the battalion commander on his open-door policy, complaining about the forced room reassignments. Later that afternoon, I was ordered to report to the battalion commander. Upon entering his office, he asked me if what the soldiers had told him was true about my requiring the room assignments to be changed. I informed him it was, and I explained my reason was to eliminate drugs from the barracks. I also described my previous experience in the tank company and the results produced. The battalion commander congratulated me for my course of action, and the new room assignments were permitted to remain. Drug abuse in the barracks was no longer apparent during the remainder of my assignment as platoon leader.

### **UCMJ Win-Win Outcome**

#### **Tom (Roz) Rozman A-3 29484**

In 1976, the country was celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. My Infantry company, Company A, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 58th Infantry, 197th Infantry Brigade (Separate), was selected to be one of the parade units at the large celebration on main post in front of the yellow brick Infantry School building.

Alpha company's schedule had been heavy for the last six months. The highlights of our efforts included:

- Deployments to West Texas and New Mexico for a month of operations and gunnery in the desert,
- Four months supporting the Development and Operational Test-2 of the Mechanized Infantry Fighting Vehicle
- Re-training over 20 non-commissioned officers as infantry sergeants
- A week-long Inspector General inspection of my company.

The subsequent six months promised to be as active. In this maelstrom of activity, I found myself reviewing a soldier's personnel file before conducting a non-judicial punishment hearing. The latest infraction, several previous incidents, and counseling, caused the platoon leader to recommend Article 15 punishment.

I also interviewed the platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and first sergeant for their input.

The soldier receiving discipline was a specialist fourth class, the fourth pay level in the enlisted ranks. His father was a retired command sergeant major.

The 20-year-old African-American young man was an impressive soldier at 6'2". He was athletic, like a college football fullback. Plus, he was articulate and seemed to have leadership ability.

However, he exhibited some of the attitudes of insubordination and refusal to follow orders not uncommon in the Army at the time. As the company commander, I reviewed the well-documented charges, assessing the progression of events that led to the present situation. Some of the young man's behavior seemed to be triggered by those negative attitudes.

After reviewing the case with the company's supporting JAG (Judge Advocate General's Corps) officer, I decided to handle the hearing at the company level. He pointed out preceding situations where the company had dealt with soldiers progressively and constructively. However, this soldier was not correcting his behavior, and it was worsening. The JAG officer's opinion was if the case were contested at a court martial, the soldier would be found guilty.

Several key themes stood out to me. The company authorized 187 men, but was over-strength, with 194 to 222 soldiers. Despite this number of troops, the company had experienced a low level of disciplinary issues. Much of this could be attributed to the high tempo of mission activity, sustained physical conditioning, and the chain of command's approach to leadership and troop involvement.

In many ways, the company operated like a practical NCO Academy. Our officers and NCOs encouraged soldiers to use the installation's education center and Army correspondence course programs to pursue defined tracks toward qualification for promotion to sergeant. Each soldier's potential was assessed early. Those who demonstrated potential were mentored, monitored, and scored for progress.

This internal focus on building NCO leaders from its junior ranks under the turbulent personnel conditions of the times was critical to sustaining competent leadership. We also used the Army's replacement system aggressively, requesting NCO replacements against projected losses. But the replacement system at the time was lagging. Priority was to send NCOs to form new light infantry divisions. Our company's internal NCO academy was not a nice-to-have but a necessity. And it worked.

With troop engagement and other initiatives, each soldier at least sensed that the company was interested in him and his success, even though the schedule was a busy one.

For the most part, the soldiers reciprocated. And as the CO, I made it my business to know each soldier.

As I thought over the non-judicial punishment situation before me, I knew the soldier was at a crossroads. His behavior was not improving. If anything, it promised to deteriorate rapidly. Plus, other sources confirmed he was associating with people outside the company who encouraged bad behavior. Still, I decided to gamble on the man—there seemed to be much worthwhile in this soldier to save.

So, I held the hearing in my office with the platoon leader, first sergeant, platoon sergeant, and the soldier present. I read the charges, let the platoon leadership present their case, and allowed the soldier to respond.

Then, I questioned all parties on efforts by the chain of command to work with the soldier to correct previous behavior that led to the Article 15 hearing. I also asked the soldier several questions concerning his failure to respond to these efforts to bring his conduct up to standard.

When the discussion concluded, I recessed the hearing to consider the punishment. The serious nature of the charges warranted significant punishment. Ideally, the punishment, when published, would show other company soldiers that such behavior would not be tolerated, and if it reoccurred, it would be strongly sanctioned. Also, the punishment needed to signal to the soldier being charged that continuing behavior in the direction he was going would be more firmly dealt with.

Based on all the factors, I determined to reduce the soldier by one rank, apply the maximum penalty, and impose restriction to the barracks.

I resumed the hearing after having the soldier and his leadership re-enter my office and presented my determination. The hearing concluded, and the first sergeant processed the charge sheet.

But I had the soldier remain for a private meeting and asked for his thoughts on the seriousness of the hearing and its results.

The soldier's response was defensive, and there was anger. But he did show a sense of understanding of why events had gone as they did and his contribution to the result.

Then, I told him that he was the image of an Army leader. He had the physical presence, the athletic ability, and the personality to lead and lead well. He was articulate and smart. He could be anything he wanted to be. It was all up to him.

I added that he came from a good family. His father was a distinguished soldier. He represented these fine people and their hard-earned traditions and accomplishments for his generation. How did "he" want to go forward? Did he want to honor his family? Did he, through his continued service, want to bring credit to his people?

At first, the soldier presented a stern face—but then he seemed to sense something more significant than his immediate situation. I hoped he saw a glimmer of his future role as an NCO.

At this point, I made an offer to the soldier. Because of his potential, I would suspend the reduction. I said, “During the suspension period if you turn your ship in the right direction, I promise I will put you on a track to become an NCO.”

The soldier had not expected the meeting, my analysis of him, or the proposal. But, as I suspected, the soldier’s character was worthy—with a quiet thoughtful response, he accepted my challenge.

Seven months later, as I cleared out my desk a few days before departing the unit for a new assignment, the soldier knocked on my office door. I invited him to in. The newly promoted sergeant saluted and extended his hand in a simple thank you. I saluted back and shook the sergeant’s hand and wished him Godspeed on his future career. Clearly, we had forged a “Win-Win” for the soldier, myself, our chain of command, and the Army.

**Lesson Learned:** Sometimes when soldiers are shown that their leaders believe in them, that their leaders see their potential for excellence, and are offered an opportunity to rise above their misdeeds, they will climb above their past and become what is expected of them.

### **Take up the Guidon**

**George (Barney) Forsythe C-1 28983**

During my initial assignment in the Army, when I was still a first lieutenant, I became the company commander of the unit in which I served as a platoon leader and executive officer. My advancement was sudden and unexpected, caused by the unplanned resignation of the former commander. This experience taught me how to take charge in a crisis and earn the organization’s trust.

The resignation shocked the other officers and senior NCOs in the company with whom I had served. When this happened, the company first sergeant advocated with the battalion commander for me to take command of the unit. I felt sure he was confident he could train me (and he did). So, the battalion commander called me into his office and offered me command, which I humbly accepted.

A mix of excitement and anxiety filled me as I accepted the guidon in front of the assembled company. *Was I ready at such a young age to face the challenges of command?* Immediately after the change of command ceremony, the first sergeant walked into my office and said

with the tone of an experienced mentor of junior officers, “Sir, let’s get one thing straight between the two of us: you command this company...and I run it.”

It took me a few minutes to figure out what he was talking about—he was clarifying our roles. My job was to set the company’s direction and ensure the unit was well-trained and capable of performing our wartime missions. His job, and that of the NCOs, was to ensure the soldiers were fit, equipped, individually proficient, and ready to go. We would succeed as a team if I did my job and trusted others to do theirs.

Next, I assembled the officers and senior NCOs of the company and told them I was humbled to serve as their commander, and together, we would build a leadership team that would make our company the best in the brigade. I acknowledged to the other officers that we had recently been peers and were still friends. I also stressed my confidence in their leadership. Furthermore, I recognized that I had much to learn and emphasized we would learn together by making training the cornerstone of our leadership.

I was blessed to have professional officers and NCOs who accepted my role as their commander and bought into my vision for improving the unit. It helped that we already had good relationships and trusted one another as former unit leaders. The result: I commanded the company for twenty-three months, and it was a highlight of my thirty-five years of service in uniform.

### **Reflections on company command**

Command gave me the authority to exercise influence in the unit. However, I realized it was essential to reinforce the chain of command’s initial trust. To do that, I focused on expanding my expertise, demonstrating my character, and showing that I cared for the soldiers I was serving—leadership principles I learned from my father.

In hindsight, I understand that my approach was to make *Serve With Integrity* my guidepost as the company commander. I knew I should be a role model for the other leaders and soldiers in the unit, and I needed to be an expert infantryman. Focusing on training and tactics allowed me to do just that. I studied and practiced the skills for the Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) test and instituted a training program to prepare every soldier in the company to earn the EIB. Most of them did.

Together with the officers and NCOs, we planned and conducted rigorous tactical training to prepare for our wartime missions. Plus, we conducted after-action reviews following every training event to ensure we were learning as a unit. That process led us to develop a tactical SOP for the company and practice our procedures and battle drills during weekly training. Over time, we all improved as individual soldiers and as a combat-ready team while earning high marks on all the Army evaluations.



Early in my tenure, one of our soldiers didn't show up for work and was listed as AWOL on the morning report. He had never been in trouble before, and everyone considered him a good soldier. I called his home in the States to see if his parents knew his whereabouts. That question initiated a long conversation with his father.

The next day, the soldier reported to the unit and explained his absence. I conducted a non-judicial punishment hearing and described to him how important he was to the unit and how we counted on him to do his duty. Then I tore up the Article 15 charges and told him I expected him to be the best soldier in the company in the future—and he was. He became a “lifer” and is now a retired NCO.

Here is the rest of the story. I don't remember the specifics of this incident; it was just one of many actions I took as a commander. But at a company reunion thirty-seven years later, the soldier and several other company mates shared their view of this story and related how giving him a second chance caused the other NCOs to trust that I would take care of them.

**Lessons Learned:** Unexpectedly, stepping forward to take command is never easy, especially in times of crisis. But crisis situations are common in life. It happened to me several more times during my career, both in the military and civilian life. Each time, I drew on what I learned in my company-level assignments:

- ✓ Be humble to learn and grow
- ✓ Develop expertise throughout the organization to serve effectively
- ✓ Lead with integrity so that your values are clear and your actions are congruent
- ✓ Take care of those you serve.

### **The Perfect Butt Chewing**

**Charlie Ennis B-4 29050**

In 1992, during my second year in battalion command, one of our best warrant officers was stopped for driving under the influence on a Saturday morning. It turned out that John had a well-hidden drinking problem that neither his company commander nor I had noticed.

Under the community command structure in the European Theater, Article 15 authority to charge officers rested with a major general who was not in the accused's direct

chain of command. I had worked with the general quite a bit over community issues and knew he did not know the warrant officer.

On the day of the hearing, John's wife, his current company commander, and his former company commander made a three-hour drive to attend as character witnesses gathered in the general's outer office. The two-star officer stuck his head out of his office, glanced around, and asked me to join him. In just a few minutes, he asked the right questions to get a sense of John's performance and potential, and he asked my opinion of his proposed punishment under Article 15 procedures. Then, he had me bring John and the two company commanders into the office.

The first words out of the general's mouth were, "Chief, do you have a drinking problem?" John admitted that he had a drinking problem that went back several years and that since the arrest, he had entered a recovery program. The general then proceeded to flay John for letting down his unit, the warrant officer corps, and his family while displaying unprofessional judgment. John was sweating at a rigid position of attention, and I think even my knees were knocking a bit.

At that point, the general pivoted. His voice softened ever so slightly. He slowly began to build John back up. The general pointed out that not only did John's current company and battalion commander support him, but his former commander had made the effort to show up as a character witness. He reminded John that his wife was waiting in the outer office to support him. He commended John on taking the first step toward recovery. He talked about how the unit and the Army still needed him to perform at his highest level. He ended by fining John the maximum amount allowable, then suspending the fine for the duration of John's assignment to the unit. I knew the fine was coming, but the suspension caught me off guard.

The general had ripped John's heart out, stomped on it, and then sewed it carefully back into place with caring hands. He had come down hard on John but left him more focused on recovery and being a good soldier than on the potential loss of pay.

I later sent the general a note telling him how much I had learned from him that day. I saw John about two years later in his new assignment and was invited to dinner at his house. I found that he was still sober, the couple's marriage was strong, and John was doing great in his new assignment. Clearly, that butt-chewing had its intended effect.

**Lesson Learned:** When disciplining a subordinate, it is important to leave him or her feeling that they have value, that they can recover from their mistake, and that you are there to help.

## Category: Integrity

### The Cost of Integrity

Richard (Dick) Snider C-4 28961

The Class of 1970's motto is "Serve With Integrity." The problem with this motto is that we are each challenged somewhere in our career with the issue of integrity – and that would also be true even if we had a different motto. The question we have to decide is, how much do I believe in integrity in "my" life?

My challenge came after being stationed in South Korea for the first five of eighteen months. I had just been promoted to Captain and was put in command of the Attack Helicopter unit for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. I had seven other pilots and six AH-1G Cobras assigned.

Having inherited a maintenance mess, I was able to get four of the aircraft flyable. But then, we found four of the six aircraft had the same cracked structural component that grounded them. We could still fly two helicopters legally and safely, but there were no replacement parts in any other unit in-country or in the General Maintenance Depot south of us.

My commander, a Major, ordered me to fly four aircraft, regardless of the regulations that grounded two of them, for a live-fire exercise that would be held for the Secretary of Defense, who was visiting the Division. After explaining the situation to the Major, he still gave me a direct order to fly four regardless.

Now, an "integrity issue" was in my face. I had been assigned the unit because my predecessor was relieved of command and sent back to the States with his career over. There was no doubt in my mind that if I did not fly four Cobras on that and the next day, my career would also be over. I refused his direct order.

The Major relented for that day, which was a rehearsal "wet run," and I only had to launch two Cobra's. But he again commanded me to fly four aircraft for the next day. I agreed to fly the two operational aircraft, assigning myself as one of the pilots. However, I refused to fly two grounded aircraft, along with the two flyable helicopters, the next day.

Given a fly or no-fly peacetime circumstance, I resolved that my integrity was more important than my career. Every graduate from USMA would know what I was giving up by serving with integrity.

Upon returning to home base after flying the wet mission, I received a TWX that grounded every AH-1G in the world for a one-time inspection of the part we had found cracked. Now, every unit in the world was required to ground every aircraft with a cracked part until it was replaced with a new part. Repair was not allowed. Only replacement was allowed.

I was off the hook! But not quite. Although my Major now had a reason why he could not provide four Cobras for the exercise, he had, shall we say, ill feelings about Captain Snider. Those ill feelings showed up a month later when I transferred to an Air Cavalry unit, which triggered the need for an officer evaluation report (OER) of my performance. Not surprisingly, the major's rating for me was low enough to end my career.,

However, unbeknownst to me, my endorser, a Colonel and Commander of the Division Aviation Unit, greatly disagreed with the Major and gave me a perfect score and a fantastic commendation.

I later learned that the OER was removed from my official records in DC because of the rating disparity between the rater and the endorser.

Here are other pointers that are helpful when dealing with Serving with Integrity challenges:

- Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
- Scripture also says, "And I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."
- While, the Cadet Prayer says, "Help me to do the harder right than the easier wrong."

**Lesson Learned:** As officers, we must serve with integrity, mindful of how that protects our soldiers and units, regardless of any personal impact on our career. That is why I was and am willing to place my integrity over my career.

## **Bends In The Road**

**John Fishback C-2 28814**

When I graduated, I was 99.9% certain that I would be a 30-year career person with the goal of becoming a flag officer.

After graduation, when the first orders came out for promotion to first lieutenant, I was among six or seven classmates in the top 5%. I hadn't paid much attention to the orders, but when a classmate alerted me, I was elated. I was on track toward my service goal.

However, a bit later, our class officers complained to the Army's Chief of Staff, General Westmoreland, that it was too soon to rank members in our class. So, they asked him to cancel the orders and issue new orders in accordance with our graduation seniority position.

It's not so much that I disagreed with the result of the request. But, how it occurred was bothersome:

- #1 Only a couple of classmates pushed the request.
- #2 None of us affected were contacted to advise us of the request.
- #3 None of us affected were asked our opinions.
- #4 Such an issue should have been decided by a majority of our 1970 classmates, not only by a few.

The above action made me realize that, unfortunately, too many in the military do not 'Serve with Integrity'. It was also a deciding factor in why I resigned from the Army when my five-year service commitment ended.

West Point headhunters showed up the year before I was due to get out and offered me a position with Johnson & Johnson (J&J). It was, and is, a national company respected for brand-name consumer health and skin care products, over-the-counter medicines, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices.

The headhunter who approached me was also a West Point graduate who promised I would be on a fast track to middle management in two years.

Unfortunately, after I submitted my resignation, while I was the Project Officer for the construction of the Hale KOA hotel on Waikiki Beach, J&J told me that the special program was no longer available. It was too late to return to my other option of working for Procter and Gamble. So, I wasted six months of my life with J&J as a medical salesperson.

Years later, as a senior project manager for Parsons Corporation, I took an assignment in the Republic of Palau, the smallest country in the world, anticipating doing a major airport upgrade in Guam.

Before accepting the Palau job, I had Parsons agree to send a container load of my personal effects as it would be a long-term assignment. The contract also stated that my household goods would be returned to the point of origin at the end of the job.

After three years in Palau and one year on the airport project, the major expansion was canceled, and my position was eliminated. When I asked the division manager, a West Point graduate, to honor my contract and return my container load of personal effects to the point of origin in Hawaii — he refused.

The grad denying that part of my contract knew that if I complained, he could destroy my chances for advancement in the company or even another company. Once again, lack of integrity by a graduate of the Academy.

**Lesson Learned:** The Long Gray Line isn't always straight. Be aware of this fact before you are confronted with the first big bend in the straight and narrow. Then, do not let it create resentment in you nor diminish your future Service with Integrity.

## **Lie For Me**

**Paul J. Fardink C-2 29461**

It was 1976, and I was a Captain assigned as the Operations Officer for the 121st Aviation Company (Soc Trang Tigers) at Fort Benning, Georgia. We were the only helicopter lift company at Fort Benning. Our primary mission was supporting the Infantry Center and School.

The company had deployed to the Ocala National Forest to support the 197th Infantry Brigade and summer field training exercises at Camp Blanding, Florida. During this training period, the 121st had conducted numerous combat assaults when a UH-1H helicopter crashed. There were no injuries, but the aircraft suffered damage, and a CH-54 Skycrane heavy-lift helicopter was called in to sling-load it out of the forest.



Ch-54 Lift Mission - photo courtesy of pinterest.com

I notified the Commanding Officer that I would report the accident as required by regulations. He told me not to report the accident and that we would try to fix the helicopter ourselves. I reminded him that as an Army Aviation Unit, we were required by regulations to report all accidents, especially when extensive damage occurred.

He gave me a direct order not to report the accident. He was a major and told me, “I have to make Lieutenant Colonel.” He was obviously afraid of a black mark on his record. This behavior was not the first time he had “pushed the envelope,” telling me he had to make Lieutenant Colonel.

I was angry, upset, and afraid, knowing that if I reported the accident, I could receive a very poor Officer Efficiency Report (O.E.R.), ending my Army career. However, I was not about to risk dragging the unit into deeper trouble by not reporting the crash. I reported the accident to our Battalion Headquarters and subsequently up the chain of command. I did not feel good about any of it. I had defied a direct order of my commanding officer.

**Valuable Lesson Learned:** There is no substitute for telling the truth or doing the right thing. If I had followed the order, I would have compromised my integrity. That is something from which you can never really recover.

The Battalion Commander learned of the situation and ensured I did not get a lousy O.E.R. The incident did not affect my Army career; I retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

## Reenlistment Integrity

### Anonymous Classmate2 A002

The commander of the infantry battalion in which I was a rifle company commander held a “reenlistment breakfast” once a month. The battalion commander, five company commanders, and the battalion reenlistment NCO attended the breakfast.

Most important to this story was the commander was motivated to have a good reenlistment rate since it was an indicator of how well he was doing his job.

A supporting influence was how the unit’s “reenlistment rate” was determined. Typically, a unit had several soldiers eligible for reenlistment. This included soldiers within a given number of months before the end of their current enlistment. The reenlistment rate was determined by the number of soldiers who reenlisted compared to the number eligible to reenlist. If all of the soldiers eligible for reenlistment did reenlist, the unit would have a 100% reenlistment rate. This rate supposedly reflected the commander’s ability to instill morale and esprit, thereby making soldiers eager to stay in the service. If only half of the eligible soldiers were re-upped, the rate would be 50%.

Unfortunately, that decision could be purely subjective, even if the soldier had no negative disciplinary record. Anyone barred from reenlistment would be ineligible to serve in any of the armed forces afterward.

As commander of A Company, I was the first to be questioned by the battalion commander during one of these sessions. He started through the list of soldiers eligible for reenlistment in my company. He asked whether the first soldier on the list intended to reenlist. I said that he did not. The battalion commander immediately declared, “Bar him.” I told the battalion commander there was no reason to bar the man, that he was a good soldier, and that I would be pleased if he reenlisted. But I did not think he would. The battalion commander repeated his order, “Bar him.”

I was shocked as he continued through the list, ordering me to bar every man I did not think intended to reenlist. It became apparent that his objective was to generate a high reenlistment rate by simply counting all of those eligible and wanting to reenlist, while barring and not counting all of those eligible but not likely to reenlist. He was willing to change the status of good soldiers simply for his selfish benefit.

I did not know if his order was lawful. However, I knew that it was certainly unethical.

**Lesson Learned:** During your military career, you may work for a commander who is not honorable. The one I worked for shattered my blind faith in the honor of the officer corps.



## Line Unit Integrity

Douglas Byrd I-1 29394

I was born into a Catholic family with significant West Point ties. Inevitably, some of that part of my upbringing rubbed off on me as I grew up. My grandfather, on my mother's side, was John Ellsworth Adkins, Jr, who graduated with the USMA class of 1923. So, my mother was an Army brat. My father grew up in a very poor, hard-working Scotch-Irish family in central Florida. After high school, he joined the Army, achieving the rank of E5 before being accepted to the West Point Preparatory School (USMAPS) in Atlanta. He got accepted to West Point and graduated as an infantry officer in June 1945.

With these positive parental influences, I was raised to understand what was right and wrong, and not much between the two mattered. So, my West Point honor code training and our Class Motto, "Serve With Integrity," fit right in with my belief system and comfort level, preparing me to perform well as an Army officer.

Indeed, an element of luck or good fortune was involved in the type of leadership that the Class of 1970 encountered in our various duty assignments. Early in our careers, some experienced good leadership and were encouraged to flourish.

Years later, I attended my brother-in-law's (Mike Cannon) promotion to Brigadier General (BG). Mike's comments at the ceremony made an impression on me. He talked about how grateful he was to receive his promotion and mentioned that it was a **Push-Pull** effect that helped him get to where he was. He thanked those family members (including my parents) and friends who supported him in his career. That was the **Push** effect. He also expressed gratitude to his military bosses (whom he named), who encouraged and mentored him along the way. That was the **PULL** effect.

Unfortunately, mentoring experiences like those that Mike enjoyed were not always at play. Many of us had less fulfilling Army experiences, and as I later became aware, these same situations applied to the civilian world.

In my case, I gradually realized that I had been raised in somewhat of a bubble. That caused me to struggle to steer through the minefields of corruption and unprincipled behavior from some of those in charge during the post-Vietnam era. Almost all graduates experience such situations. However, I was either too prideful or too naïve (maybe both) to effectively navigate through some of them. Below are four such examples.

**Example #1:** At the Academy, we were taught not to lie, cheat, or steal because, as military leaders, such behavior could put lives in danger. I knew the rules and knew they made sense. After graduation, I soon learned some things relating to honor and integrity were viewed and practiced differently.

On a parachute jump in Ranger School, we were dropped onto a Drop Zone (DZ) at Eglin AFB in Florida. On that jump, the winds were 29.9 mph, so high that the pilots had difficulty dropping us onto the DZ. Based on these conditions, the Drop Zone Safety Officer (DZSO) should have canceled the drop. As a consequence, many of us suffered minor injuries. A few suffered moderate injuries. And one of our classmates died when his head struck the tarmac at the airfield.

At our post-jump de-briefing, instead of admitting that the jump should have been canceled due to excessive winds, there was an attempt by Ranger School staff to place the blame on our deceased classmate. Staff members accused him of attempting a standing landing based on his extensive sports parachute experience. We all knew that was bogus, but all we could do was move on.

So, I gradually realized early in my career that the real military world operated differently from how we had been trained at West Point. As graduates, we were not so innocent as to believe that the real world was not different, but the fact was that some of us were better equipped to deal with the differences. Those graduates had a better skill set than I did.

**Example #2:** Our battalion in Panama was responsible for defending the two canal-zone lock systems on the Pacific side of the isthmus. So, monthly, we received alert orders, secured our gear, and headed down to our positions on the locks. During one of these exercises, our battalion commander's .45 caliber pistol went missing, and lucky me, I was assigned to handle the Article 108 investigation.



The 1911 U.S. Army .45. Caliber Pistol

Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), each person is responsible for securing his or her weapon. The battalion commander (Bn CO) had a bad habit of requiring his driver to draw his (the CO's) weapon from the arms room. In this case, the driver placed the pistol and pistol belt in the commander's jeep and left it unattended. It turned up missing.

I wrote up the straightforward report finding the person that the weapon was issued to was responsible for its loss and gave the draft to the battalion Executive Officer (also a USMA grad). He suggested that I change my finding so that the driver and the Bn CO each held 50% responsibility. With the XO being a far more experienced and successful Army major, I did as he recommended, even though the regs on the matter were crystal clear. I agreed at the time that this seemed to be a reasonable compromise even though it wasn't consistent with the regs.

It bothered me that the driver had to accept part of the blame for following orders. Had our battalion commander been much of a leader, he would have done the honorable thing by taking full responsibility. I didn't think of our XO's recommendation on my own because I wasn't skilled in navigating through these types of minefields. After all, in my mind, his driver followed a Lieutenant Colonel's orders to check out his weapon for him.

**Example #3:** The Inspector General (IG) visited Panama to evaluate the 193<sup>rd</sup> Brigade's readiness. Quickly, the Inspector General (IG) informally let all unit commanders know that any commander reporting anything higher than 20% recreational drug usage would be subject to being relieved of command for lack of leadership skills. From my first-hand knowledge of this, as a company XO, I assisted my company commander throughout this tense situation. In the end, my CO was pressured to substantively amend his original assessment of the extent of drug use in his command. After that, I realized that the use of drugs in the post-Vietnam (VN) military would never be adequately addressed because, officially, it wasn't allowed to exist in the minds of Senior Army leaders, as it might reflect negatively on their leadership as well.



USNS Comfort in the Miraflores Lock, Panama Canal, August 2019  
Photo courtesy of Defense Visual Information Distribution Service

**Example #4:** After Panama, the Army transferred me to Camp Hunter-Liggett (now Fort Hunter-Liggett). There, I became the Operations Officer of the Experimentation Battalion within the Combat Developments Experimentation Command (CDEC). I was a senior 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant filling a major's slot.

My job was to provide the personnel and equipment support for various weapon testing experiments that a group of scientists were conducting. It wasn't a combat unit, but the work was interesting, and the mission was necessary. My job was to ensure that each experiment had the required infantry personnel, tanks, or other vehicles assembled and ready to go each morning at daybreak. I had four E7s and four lieutenants reporting to me. It wasn't a difficult job, and I received positive feedback on my performance.



Lt. Byrd receiving his Army Commendation Medal at Ft. Hunter-Leggett, CA

I came to be grateful I wasn't one of the unfortunate company commanders in the Experimentation Battalion. The Battalion CO had a rule: Each company was allowed to list a maximum number of five personnel as AWOL (Absent Without Leave) on their morning reports. Otherwise, the company CO's, would be relieved for poor leadership skills.

As a result, company-level officers worked to avoid reporting more than five AWOLs. Most troubling to me was dishonestly listing the missing soldiers as on medical leave while trying to get the soldiers to return to duty. If that didn't work, platoon leaders were compelled to locate and return the bums to their units. Often, platoon leaders in each company were sent to Los Angeles or wherever the AWOLs lived to round them up so they could be listed as present.

Had I been a company commander in that situation, I would have listed everyone who was AWOL as AWOL. Yes, I would have required my platoon leaders to make the phone calls to urge their missing soldiers to return—but not to leave their posts. Because directing platoon leaders to drive and catch soldiers appeared wrong to me. Gratefully, I never had to ignore unfair or inappropriate orders from my commander.

Eventually, headquarters located a major to fill the Operations Officer position. Since I had recently been promoted to captain, the Battalion XO ordered me to return to Fort Ord to help fix problems within our rear detachment. We had about 120 troops in the rear attending medical appointments, drug withdrawal programs, or classroom training programs. The XO pointed out that the battalion was getting complaints from CDEC HQ that our rear detachment soldiers were out of control, getting into trouble around Ft. Ord, and looking disreputable. My job was to go back and square away the situation. I immediately departed for Ft. Ord.

Each morning, I inspected the barracks and each soldier's uniform appearance before releasing them to report to their assignments. After a few months, the XO informed me that some troops were complaining about me being too harsh on them.

I informed him of the basic protocols I had established and asked if HQ was still complaining about our troop's behavior and appearance. He replied they were not. I suggested to him that perhaps I was performing my job well. The battalion needed to decide which was more important, keeping CDEC HQ happy or keeping certain troopers happy. Clearly, some troops had gotten used to running the show as they saw fit.

A couple of months later, it became apparent that keeping the soldiers happy had higher priority. I was informed that the soldiers were still complaining and that I was to report back to the new Operations Officer for a new duty assignment. So, military discipline had sunk to a new low.

I dutifully reported to the major. I asked what he would like me to do. He told me two things: First, he hated West Pointers. Second, he didn't care much about what I did.

At close of business each day, the major and his NCOs brought in a case of beer and sat around BS-ing and telling war stories. After a few days of this, I begged off on the beer parties and I opted to workout at the gym or hit golf balls at the driving range.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** My experiences raise questions that may be as relevant today as they were to me then. Should we, as young officers, challenge unprincipled leadership practices or muddle through until we rise to a level where we can make a difference? What are the best practices to deal with these situations while we are simply trying to survive and keep our careers intact? Should we tilt at windmills and risk sacrificing our careers, or is it possible to adopt long-term siege tactics and wait for a time and place where we can make a difference?

**LL #2:** Reflecting on my disillusionment with how the post-VN military operated, I learned there is a skill set required to successfully navigate through a more corrupt military environment than we were used to at school.

I believe my experience would have been more fulfilling if West Point had spent more time preparing us for some of the realities of dealing with weak and unprincipled military leaders. I have concluded that better training in ethics and practical situational leadership exercises would have been useful—at least for guys like me.

Therefore, the Academy should conduct training where cadets role-play when confronted with real-world situations that have occurred in the past. Such intensive role-playing could better prepare future officers to implement situational response strategies.

**LL #3:** When faced with an uncaring and unprofessional leader, you may be left with no honorable alternative than to find new employment or even a new career.

In my case, the unprofessional and often unethical leadership situations I encountered during my service were difficult to deal with, and I felt that continuing to serve in this environment was, in some way, condoning what was going on. Plus, these practices appeared to have become institutionalized and that I was fighting city hall.

Seeing no way out, I got my Master's in Public Administration (MPA), and when my five-year military commitment was up, I started a new civilian career in city management.

Note: I would like to clarify that I always enjoyed the military part of my job. In Panama, for example, we had ideal training areas, lots of autonomy, and very few equipment shortages. I appreciated being on jump status, serving in my various assignments, as well as training in the jungle with my recon platoon. In Panama, we understood the challenges many of our Army units faced in Germany and felt fortunate to be with U.S. Army South (USARSO).

**Respect Good Traits**

**Robert L Sigmund C-2 29105**

The most important lesson that I have learned is how respect and disrespect impact military and civilian mission success. Respect creates trust, and from trust flows better teamwork. Disrespect reduces trust and hinders good teamwork.

Now, assuming that the objective is to accomplish the mission or get things done, teammates need to focus on the traits of a commander that lead to success and either ignore or at least accept the rest.

That focusing process can be made exceedingly tricky by arrogant, overbearing, and judgmental behavior by peers or superiors. As it can when someone's flaws include greed, arrogance, or mistreatment and misjudgment of oneself or others.

Unfortunately, it took time for me to effectively focus on someone's better mission accomplishment traits while ignoring their poor ones. That difficulty first surfaced in the regular Army in 1971 when I was the Squadron Maintenance Officer in Germany. I did not respect the Squadron Executive Officer (XO) and a junior operations officer. The next time, I was a Company Commander at Fort Knox and again disrespected an XO.

Things were far more difficult in my National Guard and civilian careers. A particularly tricky situation occurred in the Guard with a battalion commander who was effective but frequently absent. Later in my civilian career, a peer turned on me when he was promoted, probably because of my previous criticism.

In the National Guard and as a civilian, I encountered flawed superiors who deserved my respect. I sometimes criticized these individuals, usually behind their backs, and in doing so, probably dampened any opportunity to collaborate or team with them. Sometimes, the criticism was valid, but I should have kept it to myself.

Meanwhile, despite my flaws, the people who supported and respected me, were often Battalion or higher commanders or their civilian equivalent.

Those superiors and some peers who respected and valued me accepted my flaws. For that, I am grateful and should have learned from them. At those times, I did not realize the respect-while-accepting process, only that I felt accepted and valued.

**Lesson Learned:** Over time, I matured and learned that more can be accomplished by building better teams through trust in my teammate's mission accomplishment traits while accepting their other flaws. The process was difficult and sometimes unpleasant, especially when I felt devalued or disrespected. Keep these concepts in mind while trying to have the strength of character to apply them.

The opening tenets of the serenity prayer apply to the concept of building respect and trust:

“God grant me the serenity to **accept** the things I cannot change; **courage to change** the things I can; and **wisdom** to know the difference.”



In most cases, acceptance is the answer.

## **Credibility**

**Jeff Troxell C-4 28948**

Despite the abundance of aphorisms recorded throughout history, from the Greeks to those of today in the self-help section in every airport, I believe this is original. "Credibility is like virginity. Once lost, it is hard to regain."

## **Trust Must Be Earned**

**William (Bill) Knowlton D-1 28773**

When someone you do not know well says, "Trust me, everything's squared away" or "Trust me, I'll take care of it" — go check. I've been burned several times by trusting people who turned out not to be trustworthy. Let me provide two examples from my own experience.

In one case, I unexpectedly took over as a primary battalion staff officer as a lieutenant. I inherited a staff section with an E-7 NCOIC. When I first took over, he told me that everything was squared away and to leave it to him. I trusted him and believed what he said. However, I soon realized that the NCOIC was a large part of the problem, not of the solution. We missed report deadlines, reports never got filed, and actions were lost. Not surprising, I received more and more pressure from the battalion commander and executive officer (XO) to get things straightened out, or I would be fired.

I relieved him when I discovered he was spending more time selling AMWAY products on duty time than he was doing his job. I never should have trusted him until he'd earned my trust. Once he was gone, I got the section straightened out with the help of an E-5 acting NCOIC who demonstrated that he was trustworthy.

My second example occurred when I became a battalion XO. The last thing the outgoing XO told me was, "If CPT X tells you everything is squared away, go check. It probably isn't." That was excellent advice because I probably would have trusted CPT X.

Later, I learned that CPT X would lie at the drop of a hat and that he was corrupt and untrustworthy. In one incident, the battalion commander, who had trusted his word, discovered that CPT X lied that all equipment was accounted for while intentionally falsifying sensitive item reports to account for property lost through

negligence. Had I initially trusted him, the damage from his misconduct and lack of integrity would have been far worse. The battalion commander got burned by taking him at his word, assuming the junior officer was honorable.

**Lesson Learned:** Assuming someone is trustworthy before they prove their trustworthiness is a mistake.

More often than I'd expected, I found, while on active duty or during my second career as a university professor, that individuals did not have the integrity that I initially assumed they had.

## Category: Appearance

### Boy Scout

#### John Norton Jr. B-3 29307

In 1989, while serving as the Professor of Military Science at Brigham Young University, I was walking across the campus one day. I was going to a ceremony wearing my Army Dress Greens with my green Field Grade Service Cap, my awards, and decorations.

As I passed a BYU student with his family, I heard his young son ask, "Daddy, is he a Boy Scout?" Somewhat amused, I slowed down to hear the father's answer. "No, son, he's in the Air Force." I just kept walking, smiling broadly and gently shaking my head from side to side.

### Exaggerated Traits

#### Charlie Ennis B-4 29050

This lesson came to me in the easiest way possible. It was told to me. Yet, it still took two full years for it to sink in.

If you are fortunate enough to be selected for battalion or brigade command, you usually attend one or more pre-command courses, including a week at Fort Leavenworth.

Near the end of that week, all the commanders-in-waiting gather in a lecture hall for a presentation generally given by a brigadier general. Someone senior too, but not that far removed from the audience. I attended pre-command twice, where the speakers provided ground-level advice from their personal experience. They were great sessions.

Preparing to take battalion command, I recalled the one-star making the point that whatever leadership or personality traits you have, will be greatly exaggerated in the eyes of your subordinates and not always in a good way. If you chew someone out in public, you're a screamer. If you have more than one drink at a social event, you're a heavy drinker. If you treat people nicely, you're not tough enough. His point was to be yourself and be aware of the image you project.

Well into my second year of command, my brigade commander mentioned that everyone on his staff thought I was nice, then with a slight pause, he added, "Perhaps too nice." I don't recall if I even replied, but I thought about his comments for quite some time.

Yes, I tend to smile, be cheerful, and handle things with humor, but I had never considered it a potential sign of weakness if that was what my brigade commander was insinuating. I did not deliberately change my ways, but it made me aware that what I thought was just being friendly may have been perceived as being weak.

The point was more humorously driven home at my farewell dinner. One company commander presented me with a large hand-drawn caricature sketch of me on a racing bike with an oversized mug of beer in one hand. Not exactly flattering, it emphasized my barrel chest above a beer belly and a greatly exaggerated smile. True, I was a bike enthusiast and enjoyed a few beers with the unit after hours when I visited. But those were the two characteristics that jumped out in their minds.

My executive officer then entered from the kitchen area and plopped a dripping wet gym towel onto the table in front of me, saying I had left it in the weight room. Guilty as charged, I hit the weights hard, sweat a lot, and probably failed to wipe a bench occasionally, and the staff had noticed. We all laughed.

**Lesson Learned:** The one-star had been correct. As a leader, your characteristics are often greatly exaggerated in the eyes of your subordinates.

## Chapter 6 — Civilian Ventures



For many of our classmates, their time in the military passed swiftly, while many lessons were yet to be learned as a civilian. This chapter presents graduates becoming and functioning as a civilian.

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### Category: Military to Civilian Transitioning

#### Farewell to Arms

**Gary Cornelison E-3 29166**

My military career was challenging and satisfying, and I was rewarded with higher rank and responsibility. However, in 1988, as a Navy O5 Commander, it became necessary to accept personal and family sacrifices to become eligible for further promotion.

Inevitably, all of us that go into the military must decide whether to continue active duty. That decision demands a realistic understanding of the differences between professional military and civilian life. With little civilian work experience and having entered active service at the age of 18, many Academy graduates may not fully appreciate, and thus, significantly underestimate the challenges presented after departing from a military career to pursue a civilian one.

I enthusiastically left active duty, and my decision was made for valid financial and family reasons. However, a better appreciation of what I was leaving behind might have led to a different evaluation of the trade-offs and possibly a different decision.

**Lessons Learned:** The decision to depart from active military service should be made with a clear understanding of what is being **given up** and what will be **encountered** in civilian life. Here are some insights from my experience that I later learned and that I wish I had known before making my decision:

- ✓ As a professional military officer, you are part of a well-organized, well-trained, highly motivated, and cohesive organization. This environment is mainly without parallel in the civilian world.
- ✓ The rules under which you operate are well-defined, and the path to advancement and success is clearly defined. You are assisted and encouraged in your career decisions. That is not the case in the civilian world, and typically, you must manage your career unaided and possibly even opposed by your contemporaries.
- ✓ Your fellow officers and subordinates are trained and expected to be supportive. You share common objectives and motives. That may not be the case outside the military community, and authority, loyalty, and accountability issues are less clear.
- ✓ Your affiliation with the friends who continue their military careers and the camaraderie you shared with them will largely terminate with your departure from active duty. That may cause a feeling of loss and loneliness that is difficult to overcome.
- ✓ My warning is not to be influenced by unrealistic expectations of the simplicity of transitioning or the ease with which a similarly rewarding civilian career can be established.

### **Go or Stay?**

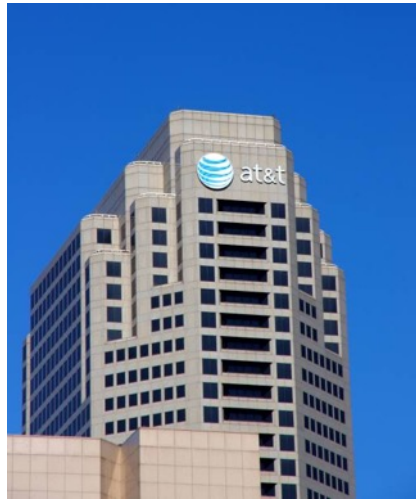
**John Dobiac B-3 28906**

I had some career decisions to make as a Captain with nine years of Signal Corps service. In 1979, I managed a group of civilian and military personnel in the 7th Signal Command, Fort Ritchie, MD. Our role was developing plans for telecommunications upgrades at various Army installations.

We worked with AT&T in this planning effort. AT&T was a 100-year-old government-regulated monopoly with over one million employees. It was the sole provider of telecommunications equipment and services in the United States.

Frustrated after a significant disagreement with the Signal Branch assignment officer, I made my decision. I left the Army that year and joined AT&T. I felt I could easily transition by leveraging my programming and telecommunications skills developed at

West Point and in the Army Signal Corps. Any career change is daunting. Nevertheless, my first five years with AT&T confirmed my decision was wise.



AT&T Corporate Headquarters in Dallas TX  
photo courtesy of iStock.com

However, in 1984, an antitrust settlement forced AT&T to divest the Regional Bell Operating Companies providing local telecommunications services, make all its patents royalty-free, and permit non-AT&T equipment (phones, switches) to use AT&T connections. Now forced to compete with firms like MCI and Sprint, AT&T was no longer the business I had joined for stability and security.

Faced with the decision to leave or adapt, I decided to stay. I realized that if AT&T was going to be a successful competitor, it needed new services and related customer-facing systems like ordering and billing. After several assignments in AT&T's government network services and engineering, I transferred to the company's software development organization.

I mistakenly thought the organization would welcome my engineering, networking, and programming background. Although upper management supported the move, the local members frowned on outsiders. Flexibility and ingenuity were not in their vocabulary.

I adapted by seeking out like-minded key staff and new hires who had both business and system development backgrounds—people more likely to understand and support the need for change. In parallel, I quietly requested that product management (new services) place a systems analyst on their team to facilitate integrating customer care systems into new AT&T network services.

It took almost two years to get the team in place. When marketing announced the rollout of the new service, our team was the only one willing and able to meet the schedule. I'm proud to say that our development processes became the baseline for future new service offerings. Leveraging twenty years devoted to AT&T, enabled me to move on to further success with three other companies.

**Lessons Learned:**

- ✓ No single job or company is forever. You must continually adapt and refine yourself to remain relevant and competitive or wither away.
- ✓ Even though well-formulated, the best ideas can and often fail without the necessary support from key impacted players.
- ✓ These lessons closely parallel the values I embraced at West Point, where we learned to adapt continuously and depend on each other to achieve success.

### **Leaving The Army Too Soon**

**Maggie Alcorn H-3 w29444**

I did not know my husband, George Alcorn when he attended West Point, nor did I know him when he served in the Army following his time at the Academy. In fact, I didn't know him until six years after he had left the military.

I am his second wife. His first wife was with him when he served in the Army. He left the Army after only five years because she didn't like the lifestyle – having to relocate from place to place every year or every couple of years. That made her unhappy, which made him unhappy.

**Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Unhappiness in a relationship can be a strong persuader for change that you later regret. Over the 30+ years that I have been with George, I have heard, on more occasions than I want to count, his **regrets** about leaving the Army at such an early date.

**LL #2:** George has always felt that he could have eventually been stationed at West Point had he stayed in. After all, he was ranked nationally as a squash player, Team Captain at West Point, and a varsity-level tennis player who understood the mechanics and rules of many other sports and physical activities. He still expresses his sadness at giving up his dream of serving at West Point, teaching physical education and coaching.

**LL #3:** What is the point of my and George's life experience? Please don't make a hasty decision. From years of hearing army stories, I know how difficult military life can be for the soldier AND for their families. But, when you contemplate leaving the service, first think long and hard about what you are giving up -- *the* amazing places you might experience and the many and varied opportunities available. Then, compare that future versus what it would hold if you decided to leave.

Realize that if you don't follow this thoughtful approach, you may spend the next 30-plus years regretting your choice.

### **What I Wish I Had Been Told Before Joining The Civilian Sector**

**Chuck McAteer G-4 29132**

Whether you serve five years in the Army or 35 years, I write this to benefit you. This is the list of lessons that I wish I had learned before I started out in the private sector. I acquired them from working in the private sector for 26 years (20 at Morgan Stanley) and owning two businesses. So, I have divided this list into two sections.

#### **Working for a company Lessons Learned**

1. You are leaving the service with tremendous skills and talent far beyond your peers in the private sector. You have leadership skills that they may never have. But working with civilians is very different than giving orders to soldiers: think diplomacy and tact. You will be behind your civilian peers, perhaps in the knowledge of the particular industry you enter, but far ahead of them in many other ways: leadership, mission accomplishment, perseverance, ability to adjust to changing conditions, self-discipline, ingenuity, etc.

2. Figure out what you really want to do and see if you can get paid to do it. Or, find a job close to what you want to do or accomplish in a location where you want to live.



3. Once you envision the future, set goals, tasks, and sub-tasks to get yourself there. Do you need more education or technical training? Make sure on your resume that you highlight the skills and talents that your prospective employer is looking for.

4. Look at your job from the standpoint of being the business owner. This is very important and will ensure your success: you will begin to stand out among your peers.

5 Read, study, and learn about your industry every day. Set aside time each morning to read. Be the most knowledgeable — the person people (and your boss) go to for answers.

6. Employers want to know what you will do for them and how are you will help them reach their goals/vision. Young folks, especially millennials, forget this and want to know what the company will do for them. That comes second.

7. Loyalty reigns supreme as it does in the Army, but not to the extent of unethical behavior. That is where it ends.

8. Numbers count. Actions count. Performance counts. Your performance is measurable in the private sector; never forget this. Embrace it as your own.

### **Working for yourself Lessons Learned**

1. Form a vision of what you want to do: Provide a service? Consult? Make a product? Write a business plan: there are plenty of templates on Google.

2. In my first business I provided a service: financial consulting. My second company made all-natural nutritional supplements for the over-50 men's demographic, the kind you find in GNC, Vitamin Shoppe, Etc.

3. View every hour of the show "The Profit," the CNBC (Business Channel) TV series started by Marcus Lemonis. Marcus was adopted from an orphanage in Lebanon, is a self-made billionaire, and is a brilliant businessman. His three key principles for building a great company are worth more than an MBA degree. If you want to build a great

company, focus on people, product, profit. Great people create great products and generate a good profit.

4. Determine how much money you need to start the company, then double it. You will require much more money for product development and cash flow while you attain profitability and more for advertising than you think. Advertising on social media is critical now.

5. Hire the best people you can find. Veterans are awesome. Make sure they have the skills that you need. For the key folks you can't afford to lose, pay them well and give them equity (stock) in the company. Make sure that all of your employees know that you are always ready to hear new ideas. For example, a plant in Brazil started calling all their workers "inventors." Production, productivity, and efficiency exploded.

6. If you can, start the company with someone who has extensive experience in the industry. I teamed up with a friend who had 20 years in the industry. He owned a nutritional supplement store for 20 years and has a Master of Science in Molecular Construction.

7. Make the best product in the industry, constantly look for ways to improve it, and keep a daily eye on your competition. What is your competition doing that you should be doing? Look outside your industry for new ideas. Never compete as the cheapest but always as the best. This is a must for your sales folks: they must believe in your products. And always think about your next great product. What do your customers need?

8. Keep your eye on the numbers Considering all costs, build a good profit into your calculations and make it competitive and affordable for your customers. Cash flow is everything. Remember this fact on your way to profitability.

9. If your company makes a product, your relationship with your manufacturer is critical. Ensure they know where you are going and what you are trying to accomplish. This is a win-win situation: the more successful you are, the more successful they are. Mutual trust is critical.

10. Outsource as much as possible until you are big enough to bring it in-house. Bring in only what makes sense (manufacturing, CPA, technology, etc). Try to run the company

with a small workforce, especially at the beginning. I heard about a company that does \$120 million in revenue with six employees. They outsource everything, including logistics.

11. Most veterans work for someone else. They consider their leisure time and time with family as well-earned, and so it is. Remember: when you own a business, it owns you. Before you jump into it, consider everything. God bless you and keep you.

## Effective Communication

### Ed Hirsch H-2 29269

Honest, timely, and unvarnished communications lead to mission success. This is the best lesson I learned as a cadet and a young officer, and it has served me well my whole life.

**LL #1:** The military culture thrives on honest communications with no surprises. That is not a norm outside of the Army. Below are **eight communication lessons learned** that I have been preaching to my civilian employees for forty years.

**LL #2:** Building a “No Surprises” Team is not just a strategy but a cornerstone of effective leadership.

**LL #3:** A good leader knows that if information is withheld, delayed, or not fully reported, a small fire can turn into a wildfire that can jeopardize the company’s mission and the team. A good leader hates surprises.

**LL #4:** A good leader knows that honest communication is a two-way street. Team members hate surprises too.

**LL #5:** A good leader creates and sustains a team culture in which timely, honest, and unvarnished communication is a core value embraced and practiced by everyone.

**LL #6:** A good leader ensures buy-in from all team members that the mission and the team always come first. It is always “one for all and all for one.” When this value is embedded, each team member becomes more diligent when they know that what they do – or don’t do - impacts others.

**LL #7:** A good leader never shoots the messenger. When receiving “bad news,” listen unemotionally, ask good questions, and solicit recommendations. When bad stuff happens, the team needs the leader to remain calm, assess the situation, and then takes informed action.

**LL #8** A good leader carves out the time to gather first-hand knowledge – from the bottom up. It is not enough to just rely on what your sub-leaders are telling you. Unplanned, unscripted, face-to-face interactions is where you often get the best honest communications about what is working and what isn’t working.

**LL #9:** The way to stop water cooler rumors is to speak the plain truth.

## **Traits Of A Good Employee**

**Michael Murphy F-1 29445**

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### **Background**

After retiring from the Army in 1990 at the age of 42, I spent the 1990’s working for a large TELECOM company that employed more than 50,000 people. The workforce was significantly different than the Army. The average age of our employees was mid-thirties, and, 55% of the work force were female.

Over time, I was promoted to a lower-level Executive position responsible for two back-office Revenue Assurance tasks:

- ❖ Billing System Audit and Controls (Acquisitions led to multiple standalone billing systems)
- ❖ Billing Trouble Management. (Fix errors on published business customer invoices)

The scale of these tasks was massive. The company billed over \$4 billion a quarter (Really!). Apart from some special applications and the consumer revenue stream (individuals and families), the team was responsible for assuring the accuracy of all billing

for business customers, who made up most of the quarterly billing. As my most supportive mentor once said, “You are sentenced to Billing without parole!”



Michael Murphy

As the telecommunications business grew through the 1990s, so did my group’s operating locations (six cities), number of managers (45-50), and employees (500+), all dedicated to the TELECOM’s back office financial operation. Initially, my position was fun while demanding technical innovation. For example, we rolled out new tricks like “pivot tables” and other exception-based auditing tools for people who were used to a pencil and yellow pad.

However, as I constantly traveled to the six locations, the number one issue was not technical. It was responding to manager and employee feedback, often pushback, often crying out: “How can I do better? How can I get promoted?” Quickly, my primary focus grew into “people” management.

### **Approach**

I needed to come up with a consistent and effective pitch that I could make each time I visited to have one-on-one discussions with every manager. (I was a 100,000-mile flyer for five years!) Plus, I needed a version that I could use with as many non-manager employees as I could meet during each visit.

My pitch evolved over the first couple of years into a verbal and written set of work traits.

The “What Traits Make A Good Employee” list (shown below) turned out to be effective in repetitively answering the primary employee question of what it takes to be a

strong employee and what enhances an employee's opportunity for promotion. Managers and employees easily understood the traits expressed in what I considered layman's terms. Plus, I found they easily linked to real examples in our Billing System Audit & Controls and Billing Trouble Management environment.

Employees were challenged to print the list and put it on their refrigerators. The goal for the team was "no surprises" when they had their mid-period and final yearly reviews. A person either demonstrated most of these qualities or did not. Managers (and myself) began to have an easier time writing reviews. Using these traits made it easy to write the super-performer and the very poor reviews. Performance reviews in the middle were always the more challenging to write.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** If you plan to leave the Army, and particularly if you will be working in any financial-related business, I suggest communicating and encouraging these traits in your organization. This approach did not work for everybody, but it often worked!

### **Traits That Make A Good Employee!**

- ✓ Always looking for what is broken...and fixing it
- ✓ Demonstrating leadership when not in a leadership position (Do not leave a meeting with tasks unassigned.)
- ✓ Not afraid to step out of your sandbox (You own A & B, but sometimes helping C helps you as well as the organization.)
  
- ❖ You are a stickler for quality (documentation, details, whatever!)
- ❖ You do not take shortcuts; accuracy in billing trumps everything!
- ❖ Proactive and innovative concern for process and controls (Ignore these in financial operations, and you will fail.)

- Can deal with conflict, including personality conflicts, head on, i.e., do not dodge them (no passing the buck with a Friday 5 pm email. Meet with them in the cafeteria, understand their paradigm, and do not rule out they could be right!
- Demonstrates knowledge of and concern for the customer's perspective
- You do not dodge ownership; you seek it (More responsibility can lead to higher positions of responsibility.)
  
- ✓ You understand and use the “common sense test” (work the \$50 issue before the \$5 issue . . . UNLESS . . . your largest customer owns the \$5 issue)
- ✓ You anticipate (What is changing in this month's billing cycle?)
  
- ❖ People skills . . . above, below, and horizontal (You realize that you must deliberately work at building relationships.)
- ❖ Know and use “framing” (i.e., write & speak on issues by stating and explaining: Issue, impact, options, recommendations)
- ❖ You ALWAYS support your team lead or manager in public (Problems?- then deal offline.)
- ❖ Steps in for team lead or manager
- ❖ Do not wait to be asked for info; you push it up
  
- Sensitive to team workloads
- Rehearse (dry run everything)
- Advertise your and your team's successes (good for team morale, increases credibility . . . when done with taste)
- Ability to admit you are wrong
- Build an ethical reputation (When people sense this, they seek you out, and you end up with positive influence.)
- Brainstorming with others, is VERY powerful

## Job Search

Tom Oettinger B-3 29294

Transitioning from Military life after 20+ years to civilian life can be very trying and sometimes even traumatic, especially in finding civilian employment. Although recognition and understanding of military service have improved in society today, in 1992, such was not the case. My experience was that it was extremely difficult to find meaningful employment.

### Transition Lessons

**TL #1** It is imperative to start the job search well before retirement or separation date.

**TL #2** You absolutely need to "civilianize" your resume sent to employers.

**TL #3** It is imperative to network with **anyone** you have ever known, even if you don't think they have a job to offer.

Tied closely to the job search needs to be the harsh reality that the civilian workplace is not the same as working in the military. First and foremost, understand that the concepts of "Duty, Honor, Country" are not the same as what you might have experienced in your military career. Whereas your fellow soldiers were a close-knit group who looked out for each other and had each other's backs, the competitive nature of civilian employment is different. It is often impossible to trust, believe, or have confidence that your co-worker or boss will exhibit the character qualities we came to expect in the military. Although the military's upper ranks can sometimes become rather political, the civilian workplace can be downright cutthroat. The Honor Code we cherished as cadets and held dear during our time in the military does not exist in the civilian world.

I found that we are very often asked what our priorities are in life. I think most of us say that "Family" is at the top of our list, ahead of all the other priorities. However, what we say and what we practice can become blurred or confused or forgotten. Whether in the military or civilian life, there is a delicate balance when it comes to priorities. For me, who probably didn't do my best at maintaining a good balance, the lesson learned is that "family" must be paramount--it is forever. All other priorities are transitory and should not be allowed to supersede "family" as the highest priority. Success in a career will always challenge priorities, but it shouldn't be allowed to win out over "family."

**TL #4** The most recent post-service lesson I've learned is that almost 56 years ago, we classmates started a relationship with some other young men we didn't know. However,



over the next half-century, this became a lifelong, unbreakable bond tying us together forever. It took me a long time to recognize this lesson. Within the last several years, I've found that my West Point company-mates have developed into a very strong and cohesive group, even after decades of physical separation. Our four years of living and surviving at the Academy served as the foundation for this fantastic bond, which seems to get stronger every day. Then, the similarity of our early training and life experiences since graduating from the Academy made it easy to come back together again.

## **Nuclear Does and Don'ts**

**Dennis Fadden I-1 29008**

Like several of my classmates, I did not make it into West Point until my third attempt. Like all in the class of 1970, we were following our dreams. So, until I was accepted, I attended college where I found math and physics were my strengths. When I arrived at West Point, as a plebe I was put into advanced classes because of my college experience.

Previously, after the Nautilus nuclear submarine successfully sailed under the icecap, all the military branches wanted nuclear power. The Air Force envisioned a plane that could stay in the air without having to refuel. The Navy wanted to expand its fleets, and the Army wanted portable power plants to use in theaters of operation.

In 1969, West Point responded to the need for nuclear aware officers by starting a Nuclear Engineering course during my senior year. My physics professor encouraged me to take the course, which I did. In it, we were told the Army was thinking of having barge mounted nuclear power generators with extension cables ran onto the beach. However, the Joint Chiefs decided the Army did not need to focus on nuclear support equipment.

After I turned over my Air Defense Artillery (ADA) command, I discovered the Army was downsizing and my future looked like a series of staff positions. In 1976, I decided to retire from active duty and joined the Active Reserve in Idaho Falls. There I started my civilian nuclear career by training Navy officers, about nuclear-powered submarines.

During the next three years, while losing bets with the Navy officers over the Army/Navy games, I viewed the nuclear powered airplane. It was mothballed because the Joints Chiefs had made the earlier decision that only the Navy would have nuclear power. That was a good decision. The plane was big and would have been an easy target!

Leaving that job, I began working in commercial nuclear power plants. Before the Three Mile Island accident, nuclear electrical generating plants didn't have a common platform to share information. After the nuclear accident, the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) was formed in Atlanta, and I was hired. For that career I inspected electrical nuclear power plants around the world and supported the Pentagon in my active reserve position with the Nuclear and Chemical Agency.

### **Nuclear “To Do” Lessons Learned:**

1. Keep current on the changing regulations now that more people are looking at nuclear power electrical generating plant to combat global warming.
2. When you are responsible for a crew (smaller than a platoon) keep them on schedule for training and drills.
3. Always be training your replacement.

### **Nuclear “Not To Do” Lessons Learned:**

1. Unless you are in an emergency, don't act alone.
2. Don't skip training even though it might be repetitious.
3. Don't ignore established rules.

## **Leverage Your Strengths**

### **Harry Michael (Mike) Ryan H-2 28792**

As 1991 began, I knew my retirement from the U.S. Army was approaching. My 21-year career as an Army Engineer was coming to an end. So, what's next?

During my high school and early cadet years, I believed I had a knack for mathematics. Although I took most of the math sequences at West Point, I soon discovered that the higher, more theoretical math courses were more of a puzzle to me than fun. However, I did find that applied math addressing practical problems was a real kick and something I excelled at. This realization led me to pursue Operations Research/Systems Analysis in graduate school. My strong skill set was using numbers to address real-world problems and key to my professional growth.

In preparation for retirement, I attended a career transition seminar in the Washington, D.C., area that helped military personnel become comfortable with civilian employment and job searching. I was at the right place at the right time, as one job announcement sought someone familiar with databases and Army facilities. That sounded like my kind of work.

Soon, I was hired as a military analyst with a contractor team working on-site at the Pentagon. Our team supported the Assistant Chief of Engineers (ACE) in their mission to manage Army facilities and installations worldwide.

I found my comfort zone was working with a variety of systems and databases. After a period, our supported Army office transitioned from the ACE to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM). Simultaneously, I was promoted from analyst to Project Manager for our contractor effort. Our team gained responsibility for analyzing various issues, including requirements and funding levels for real property maintenance of Army facilities, condition assessment of Army facilities, new construction implications, real property inventory projections, and base realignment and closure.

I constantly worked with Department of the Army staff in various organizations, and soon became recognized as a go-to resource for accurate and informative data and information.

Over 19 years working on-site with our client, I was able to demonstrate our team's value numerous times to new military division chiefs who would come to the new job asking, "Why do we need contractors to do our work?" We were able to show our value in multiple ways: in-depth understanding of their data and systems, reliable products for non-standard requests that provided unique insight, and on-time delivery of scheduled deliverables.



Quicker and Easier This Way

Across my tenure, I trained three branch chiefs who oversaw our operations. Our team's dedication to quality performance for the client led to our firm consistently being awarded work on several different types of contracts.

During this period of my life, I found my perfect job. While managing my small team over the years, I was able to spend most of my time doing important data analysis and producing exceptional products that typically went beyond the client's request. I became a subject matter expert and found my niche working with numbers, working hard for the client, and exceeding expectations. This sense of fulfillment in finding my niche was a driving force in my professional growth and recognition.

**Lesson Learned:** Find what you like, find a way to apply it in life, and perform with gusto.

## **Life Transitions**

**Raymond Gibbons H-2 29157**

Every life is a story. Sometimes, we write our own and sometimes, we are characters in the work of some unseen author's hand. Some have strong narrative structures. Some seem to wander aimlessly.

Mine is one of serendipity, taking place over many years in many cities and told in many languages, where I shift shapes like the mythic Proteus in Menelaus' grasp. Plus, my story is one of soldiers, banks, and entrepreneurs of various nationalities and dubious integrity.

In Chapter-1 (*Soldier*), My Army life was a short opening chapter. I'm a young infantry officer in Cold War Berlin and post-Vietnam Fort Lewis. It had a good narrative structure, but I moved on after five years.

In Chapter-2 (*On Wall Street*), I learn how to lend big money to already rich shipowners, ride the waves to captain a whole department of ship lenders, and then go down with the ship when the market collapses in the mid-80s.

In Chapter-3 (*Paris Representative*), I wash up on the coast of Paris, where I reimagine myself as a bank's Paris Representative and begin my life as a European. When a banking war breaks out, I escape to London with my new bride. When the war ends, I am demobilized and re-reimagined as an entrepreneur.

In Chapter-4 (*Sunset of the Soviet Empire*), I re-re-reimagine myself as an executive migrant worker. I work the fields of the collapsing Soviet Empire for a villainous Swiss-based entrepreneur. I dine with KGB apparatchiks in Leningrad one week. Next, I'm with ex-KGB, soon-to-be kleptocrats in renamed St. Petersburg. Later, in Geneva, I give classes about capitalist etiquette to next-generation oligarchs.

In Chapter-5 (*California Dreams and Schemes*), I work for Greeks by running a casino ship between San Diego and Mexico. When that company sinks, I sleep in a sleeping bag on an office floor. At sunrise each morning, I wave to the homeless guy in his sleeping bag across the street, and he waves back to me.



Ray and Gwyn Gibbons at home in the United Kingdom

In Chapter-6 (*Life Goes On*), I re-re-re-reimagine myself as a maritime security guru. From the helm of a converted farm shed in the middle of England, I steer shipowners and EU regulators through waves of real and imaginary maritime threats in the post-911 world. I pontificate at conferences, conduct security assessments onboard jumbo-sized container ships, and write hundreds of ship security plans. Plus, I sit at the table when maritime cyber security is pondered. When times are good, my family and I have a house in the Cotswolds. When times are difficult, we always find a way to muddle through.

## **Lessons Learned**

After reading my life story, the Class Editor asked me to share my “transitioning skills” with future grads to help them successfully navigate any “mega changes” they might face on their life journey.

I was surprised that he interpreted my story as one of successful transitions. It certainly wasn’t the kind of success that translated into dollars or pounds sterling or in newspaper column inches. Personally, I believe my life story should be read more as a cautionary tale than as a self-improvement guide. Nevertheless, . . .

**LL #1:** Expect change. Careers come and go. Marriages end in divorce. Children are born. People we love die. Faith is lost and found.

**LL #2:** It is more important to survive than to thrive. Don’t expect too much from yourself. Give yourself time to adapt to your changes. Accept failure and try to learn from it.

**LL #3:** The real ‘skill’ in transitioning is not having to re-imagine yourself more than necessary. All transitions are risky, and every transition you make will narrow your range of future options. Don’t be afraid to transition if the world is crashing around you or if an amazing opportunity comes along. But be aware that we all have an enormous capacity for self-deception. Don’t talk yourself into chasing “opportunities,” which are nothing more than dreams.

**LL #4:** Try to make sure you end up in a place where success is possible. No matter how good you are at your job, you will not succeed if the people you work for can’t or won’t recognize your success. I performed best for bosses/organizations/clients looking to introduce new products/services or change how they operated while appreciating my ability to challenge assumptions and think outside the box. Those same skills were merely a source of irritation to others.

**LL #5:** By its very nature, a transition involves a change in context or culture, and when communicating with others, context is everything. In an American context, a “small problem” is probably nothing to worry about. However, if you are in a British context, the mere admission of a “small problem” is very much something to stress about. Each company has its own culture and communicates in its own management-speak. No matter how clearly they are worded, corporate mission statements are propaganda. Whatever an entrepreneur says, in whatever language they speak, remember they are there to manipulate you. Think CIA agent handler.

**LL #6:** It is not what you know or even who you know that is critical. It is knowing who you really are. I characterized my life as Proteus, “the old man of the sea” in Greek mythology, who could escape capture by shifting shapes. The shapes were constantly changing, but in the end, it was always Proteus that Menelaus held in his grasp.

**LL #7:** Finally, I also characterized my life as one of serendipity because, or despite, all of the changes in my life. Most of all, I have been lucky enough to have found true love with my beautiful wife and have been blessed with three amazing children. Whatever luck you may find along your way, in whatever career path you may follow, my absolute best advice, is to measure your success by the love you see in the eyes of those who choose to share their life with you.

## **Never Give Up**

**Peter Pella C-3 28912**

My brief military career in Air Defense Artillery took me from Los Angeles to Vietnam to Ft Bliss. There, I was medically retired from the Army as a First Lieutenant (1LT) in 1973 due to my Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), which I have battled ever since. That includes twelve major surgeries and several minor procedures, and now I use an electric scooter to get around.

**Lesson Learned #1:** I guarantee that you will be confronted with what seems to be a devastating situation at some point in your life. It could be a physical or emotional problem or something else that threatens to drastically change your future. I learned at West Point that you can always do more than you think you can. You can find the strength to persevere. You will know when to ask for help and when to push forward by yourself.

I never imagined at the time that I was confronted with a future dealing with extensive and possibly debilitating RA, what I could accomplish with perseverance and determination. Here are some things I accomplished while overcoming RA restrictions.

I received a Master of Science degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a PhD from Kent State University in Experimental Nuclear Physics. In between, I spent three years at West Point as Director of Physics Laboratories. I've also conducted research at the Bates Linear Accelerator Laboratory, the Indiana University Cyclotron Facility, and the Thomas Jefferson Continuous Electron Beam Accelerator, resulting in numerous publications.

I taught at Hendrix College for four years, where I met the love of my life, Eleanor Bullard. She was and still is a true southern belle from Little Rock, Arkansas. Then, I taught at Gettysburg College for 29 years. While there, I chaired the Physics Department for ten years and was an endowed Professor of Physics from 2010 until I retired in 2015 as Professor Emeritus.

I was awarded two William Foster Fellowships to work within the U.S. Government. From 1994 to 1995, I worked at the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I had this feeling that since the previous generation of nuclear physicists had built these weapons, that maybe I should be working on trying to get rid of them.”





Peter Pella receiving the Distinguished Teacher Award from the Gettysburg College faculty.  
The DTA is the highest honor bestowed by the faculty

Subsequently, I earned a Meritorious Honor Award for supporting the American effort in achieving the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It was just an amazing but complex and rewarding process in the end.

I later worked at the State Department's Bureau of Nonproliferation from 2000 to 2001 on issues relating to Iraq, North Korea, and The International Atomic Energy Agency.

I am also proud to have contributed two chapters to the Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace in October 2009. Since retirement, I have authored two books: *The Midlife Crisis of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty* (published in 2016) and *The Continuing Quest for Missile Defense* (published in 2018). I continue to reside in Gettysburg with my lovely wife, Eleanor.

**Lesson Learned #2:** Much of the mental and physical skills taught to cadets at West Point help graduates succeed later in life. Mental toughness and determination to not fail, as taught at the Academy, in Ranger School, and in the military branches, are crucial to getting you through the really tough times. However, the professors, officers, and NCOs cannot convey how brutally hard it can be to prevail. Then you will appreciate this quote from American songwriter John Prine: "Well, sure, I made it, but ya know it was a hell of a trip."

## Category: Personal vs Group Goals

### Remove the Assholes

Steven Wilson I-3 28809

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**Lessons Learned #1:** In any under-performing organization, military or civilian, you will find this structure:

- **2-4%** of the people are “angels”. Whatever they do works, but they don’t know how or why.
- **2-4%** of the people are “assholes”. Whatever they touch becomes a disaster, and they enjoy it.
- **8-12%** of the people are “movers and shakers”. These are your solid leaders that get it done.
- **80-88%** of the people are “inert”. They just go with the flow.

**Lessons Learned #2:** In failing organizations, the assholes have taken control of the inert people and are leading them in a negative direction. Before you can fix anything else, you must acknowledge and correct this dysfunctional structure. I would usually spend two or three weeks just watching and listening to what goes on in the organization. During that period, I’m looking for a target list of 5% of the organization that I suspect to be the assholes.

**Lessons Learned #3:** Once I create the list, I notify everyone on it that they will be gone from the organization in less than 90 days. They can choose to transfer, resign, or contest my decision. It became known in the corporate world that these people had been “put on the program.” Then, I used every proper disciplinary measure to ensure everyone on the list was gone in 90 days. No exceptions.

**Lessons Learned #4:** As the assholes depart, the “movers and shakers” take control of the inert people. Soon, improvements become immediately apparent. After several

successful reorganizations, the mere announcement of my assignment to reorganization would cause the assholes to quickly depart.

### Postscript

After thirteen reorganizations, my average time to achieve a successful turn-around is nine months.

### What You'll Put Up With

Joe Reeder E-1 29138

Many of you have seen the movie *The House of Gucci*, and perhaps, the wonderful Netflix series *Made You Look*. A young law partner who changed my life, Domenico De Sole, was featured in the movie and later became Gucci's Chairman and CEO (increasing its company value from \$150 million to about \$1.5 billion). In June 1979, Domenico interviewed me and caused me to change my career path. Instead of joining a big law firm in Houston, I stayed in Washington DC, with Patton Boggs.

**Lesson Learned #1:** During the interview, this high-energy partner who recruited me hard asked me with his unmistakable Italian accent if I knew about the "circle of life." I was astonished because this was not typical dialogue in a law firm interview. Bottom line, he described the circle of life as "25% brains, 25% hard work, 10% luck, and 40% putting up with the bullshit."

Really? . . . 40%



That viewpoint is remarkably accurate. Many people work with determination and are brilliant but seem to stumble on many obstacles they could have navigated if they had dealt with Domenico's 40% factor.

**Lesson Learned #2:** Many people believe that integrity mandates struggling on principles, no matter what. And, for some principles, that is absolutely true. But "compromise" can be a virtue all its own, particularly in democratic societies (and companies and organizations) that continually invite diverging inputs.

### **Civilian Conflict**

**Steven Wilson I-3 28809**

Always ask yourself: Is this really my problem? Do I want to make it my problem?

### **Plant Manager Skills**

**Howard (Howie) Parker G-3 29230**

In any organization, there are two hierarchies. The first is delineated by the vertical chain of command as depicted on the organization chart. The second is rarely vertical, more opaque, and harder to navigate. It is the hierarchy of people in the organization that people listen to and ask for advice.

**Lesson Learned #1:** It is much easier to change an organization if these people buy into it. Spend significant time on the plant floor observing and talking to everyone to discover this second hierarchy.

**Lesson Learned #2:** I've also learned that a plant manager needs an infinite capacity to be an asshole. The good ones can correctly determine how much is required to solve a situation. The corollary to this is to be careful about drawing lines in the sand. I only had one: no one refused an order from one of my supervisors without getting time off without pay.

### **True Change Agents**

**William (Bill) Hagan A-3 29022**

In the last 30 years, I have worked as a management consultant, helping many Fortune 500 companies through business transformations and major process changes.

During one of my first projects, we were tasked with significantly increasing the productivity of the production lines. We collected data, identified the cause of lost productivity, and identified potential improvements. We reviewed this with the leadership team who then issued directives to implement the change. Very little happened or changed.

We met with line operators to discuss the data, the analysis, and opportunities for improvement. An interesting dynamic occurred. When we spoke with the operators, they would frequently turn to an individual to see if he or she approved.

It was clear that those individuals were highly respected in their work group and, in many cases, had more authority than those with leadership titles. So, we recruited these individuals to define additional data then collect and work with us to lead sessions analyzing data, developing solutions, and communicating to the workforce. Things started to change fast. The leadership team came to us and stated they did not realize the capabilities of the people we had pulled into the process.

In later projects, we actively looked for informal change agents as we started the project and got them fully engaged early. This technique repeatedly made transformation projects much more effective and impactful.

### **Lessons learned:**

**LL #1:** Too often, people focus on an organization's hierarchy to drive change and then become frustrated because the workforce drags their feet to implement.

**LL #2:** Actively find change agents at multiple levels to drive change.

**LL #3:** Get the change agents involved in all aspects (data collection, analysis, identifying solutions, and leading solutions ) to add great credibility to your effort.

**LL #4:** Spend the time to educate and train the change agents.

**LL #5:** Have change agents involved in communicating to all levels of the organization.

**LL #6:** This concept can be scaled for both small projects ( downtime issues in production ) and significant strategy changes ( adjusting the product portfolio ).

**LL #7:** There is a caveat everyone needs to recognize. As you pull the change agents into action, there are times when supervision will feel threatened. Do not go around the first-line supervisor. Have the supervisor help you pick the change agent, train the change agent, and become a mentor to the change agent. A threatened supervisor can become your biggest obstacle to change.

## Postscript

This concept of finding the hidden change agents in an organization did not gel for me until I started doing transformation projects in consulting. In retrospect, I had seen it throughout my working career, though I did not then understand all of the aspects of applying the technique.

As the motor officer for an Infantry company, I had a couple of mechanics that everyone respected as the go-to guys for help and advice.

As the maintenance superintendent in two chemical plants and a food plant, there was always one or more mechanics that the other mechanics trusted for answers. Also, when troubleshooting a problem on a production line, I knew there were a couple of line operators we could pull in to make things happen.

### Performance Deficiency

Steven Wilson I-3 28809

Aside from physical disabilities, there are only two kinds of personal performance deficiencies: a deficiency of **education** and a deficiency of **motivation**.

The difference is easy to determine. If a person's life depended on it, could they figure out how to do it properly? If the answer is NO, you have a deficiency of education. They need training.

If the answer is YES, then you have a deficiency of motivation, and no amount of training is likely to resolve the problem. Instead, focus on how to motivate them.

### Integrity Under Pressure

Dave Phelan H-2 29107

West Point was a transformative experience for me in several significant ways. Like most of us, I arrived at the Academy from high school and had not been exposed to the pressures and discipline that hit on day one. I was, strictly speaking, a teenage boy with no real-world experience.

My experiences taught me several things that I have carried with me since graduation. Beyond education, I incorporated and applied the following values.

## **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** “Duty – Honor – Country” is more than just a West Point slogan. It is a way of life that provides a core set of values.

**LL#2:** “Serve with Integrity” is something to do for a lifetime and gives focus to how to conduct yourself and live an honorable life.

**LL #3:** Each of these mottos motivated me to always try to do the right thing and, when necessary, take the harder right rather than the easier wrong.

One practical application for me occurred during my civilian working career. My job called for me to compile performance data on a product we were to sell to a vendor as part of a contract. The results I obtained were not up to the specifications we were required to meet and could result in consequences for the company. The manager who a powerful person in the company and could easily get me fired was to deliver the product to the customer.

After he ordered me to “fudge” the data to provide a more favorable result, I refused. Then, the product manager threatened me with dismissal. I told him I would not do it and to talk to my manager if they had an issue. Fortunately, my manager stood up for me and the accurate but negative performance data.

As it turned out, I later changed positions and began working for the manager who had threatened me. He told me that my standing up to him taught him a lesson and that he respected my integrity under pressure.

I have always tried to live an honorable life, not always with this ending, but always keeping faith with the values West Point taught me.

## **Helping Others**

**Russell Thompson B-1 29262**

I can serve with integrity by helping some of the millions we have incarcerated find the courage to change themselves and set out on a path toward productive citizenship. I

have been volunteering inside prisons for the past 26 years. Every week, I walk away from the prison with new lessons learned for myself.

## **Community Board Problems**

**Dale Reagor H-4 28797**

After completing my military service, I went to law school and became a partner in a private law practice. I have always felt compelled to get involved in community service, giving something back to the community where I lived. I soon found myself invited to become a volunteer member of various community boards, charities, and government-related commissions over several years.

As a result of my West Point training, I frequently was selected for leadership position. Inevitably, the board faced a controversial or complex decision, such as firing an executive director, investigating employee misconduct or theft, terminating a popular program that had lost its effectiveness. Other times, it was a financial support issue, reporting an issue to law enforcement, facing adverse publicity, or implementing budgetary restrictions. The natural inclination of volunteer boards is to postpone the decision, study the matter further, and hope the problem goes away. In my experience, the problem only gets worse.

### **Lessons learned**

**LL #1:** Deal with the problem immediately.

**LL #2:** Make decisions for the benefit of the organization, not individuals.

**LL #3:** Choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong.

**LL #4:** Advocate forcefully for the position you believe is correct.

**LL #5:** When a board makes a decision that you can't support in good conscience, it may be time to resign from the board.

## **Challenging The Facts**

**Dan Shaw B-3 29295**



In 1991, I found myself in a political, moral, and personal dilemma while serving as a member of the elected Board of Education in a Connecticut town with four schools covering kindergarten to 12th Grade. I was also an unpaid High School Varsity soccer coach, and at that time, our oldest son was a high school senior who would graduate in 1992.

The Superintendent of Schools proposed building a new high school, citing projected growth over the next few years. Were his demographics reliable? If so, no one would argue with the proposed new school. As a member of the Board of Education, I considered it my duty to verify the need to expand before approving the associated high costs.

Our schools were second only to Alaska for the highest-paid teachers. Democratic State Governor Ella Grasso had promised on the campaign trail to make Connecticut schools the best in the nation. Coincidentally, the teacher's union was in negotiations to raise teachers' salaries further.

Objecting to any initiatives to improve our school system would likely meet strong resistance. I needed to do some serious homework.

I had attended countless meetings where my questions on the need for a new school produced serious threats—veiled and outwardly vocal. All I'd asked for was the basis for the demographic growth projection. That act led some to call me a “child-hating Republican Conservative.” The slur was hurtful for the fact that I had two children in the school system. My audacity in even challenging the projection resulted in anonymous late-night threatening phone calls.

This continued for two months until I obtained the 1982 study from the Superintendent of Schools. My initial reading of this study led me to concur and prepare to endorse funding for the new high school.

However, on closer examination, the study said that by 1991, the overcrowding of the high school would necessitate renting portable classrooms. The field where these classrooms would need to go happened to be our soccer practice field, and in 1992, no such classrooms existed. Something was not right.

A deeper look at the study revealed that it included numbers from a neighboring town that sent its high school students to our school at the time of the study. Since the study, the neighboring town's growth led them to build their own high school, which reduced our student population by 25% by 1991!

Armed with this information, I lobbied the Board of Education to reconsider the need for a new high school and initiate a new demographic study. That study validated the decision not to build a new school and showed that by 2004, the town would need to

consider closing one of the schools and consolidating 4th and 5th grades with the K-3 school.

Sticking up for what I believed cost me sleepless nights and no small amount of criticism. The result: It saved our town a bunch of money and, in the end, kept me on the Board of Education for two more years. It also earned me the elected role of town Selectman, overseeing the whole town's budget.

**Lesson Learned:** In this challenging struggle, I relearned the mantra of pursuing the harder right over the easier wrong. It also showed me that serving with integrity pays off.

### **Visionary Philanthropy**

**Joseph and Pam Alexander C-2 28835**

I have always believed in the power of community foundations in philanthropy. That's why my wife, Pam, and I embarked on a mission to establish a community foundation in Huntsville, Alabama where we live. We wanted to enable Huntsville residents to give back to their community in the most impactful manner possible. That revelation stemmed from the saga of a wealthy family who've had deep roots in the Huntsville community since the early 1800s, who had to entrust their family's charitable giving assets to the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham because, at that time, Huntsville did not have one.

In 2008, we sold my company to a private equity firm, which provided us with the perfect opportunity to explore our options for charitable giving. Guided by our financial advisers, we considered the common approaches to philanthropy:

- Ad hoc donations to nonprofit organizations
- Establishing a personal foundation
- Leveraging the resources of a community foundation



Joseph and Pam Alexander

Recognizing the tremendous potential of the latter, we stepped forward to establish a local community foundation.

During the mid-2000s, community leaders had already laid the groundwork for a community foundation in Huntsville. Inspired by their efforts and driven by our philanthropic vision, Pam and I provided the essential seed money that propelled the establishment of the Huntsville Community Foundation, which later evolved into the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville (CFGH). In 2013, with the foundation off and running with strong financial support from the community, Pam and I were honored by the CFGH Board of Directors as the Founding Benefactors of the CFGH.

Since its inception, the CFGH has impacted the region indelibly. Through the foundation's collective efforts, it has raised over \$85 million in charitable assets, fueling transformative initiatives across various quality-of-life sectors. The foundation is a trusted conduit between donors and local philanthropic organizations, connecting resources with needs strategically and sustainably. Our initial investment catalyzed a groundswell of philanthropy, empowering individuals, families, and businesses to make a lasting difference in the community they call home.

Community Partners of the CFGH is a special designation for donors who share a vision of mobilizing generosity to improve the quality of life in their community. Each investment in the Foundation's work builds the capacity of local nonprofits, convenes local leaders to address the community's most critical issues, and nurtures a philanthropic spirit that positively impacts a broad spectrum of needs. Pam and I once again led by

example in a spirit of philanthropy by becoming the Inaugural Lifetime Community Partners supporting the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville.

Pam and I believe generosity is simply an investment in the future you wish to see. Structuring a charitable foundation so potential givers can guide their giving into positive outcomes stimulates continued giving and lengthens a charitable organization's life and impact. Another way of saying this is that when givers see their money positively impacting the lives of others, they feel fulfilled and satisfied that they achieved what they set out to do. Pam and I certainly feel blessed with the continued philanthropic success of the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville.

### **Our Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1: Initial Investment Matters:** A generous initial investment can serve as seed money that catalyzes further charitable giving.

**LL #2: Multiplicative Effect:** One significant donation like ours can have a ripple effect, encouraging others in a community to contribute and greatly expanding the impact.

**LL #3: Shared Vision:** Establishing clear criteria for partnerships or special designations, like "Lifetime Community Partner," can encourage long-term commitment and investment from others as it did with Pam and me.

**LL #4: Leadership by Example:** Donors who lead by example in contributing to a community foundation can inspire and set a precedent for future philanthropic efforts. It always takes that one person to start the philanthropic ball rolling.

**LL #5: Community Engagement:** Actively involving the community through designations or community partnerships can foster a collective sense of responsibility and

participation. In our case, people were initially skeptical that the CFGH would just be another nonprofit vying for scarce philanthropic resources. It took several years of promoting and explaining what the CFGH was all about before it began to be widely accepted by the community.

**LL #6: Longevity:** An endowed donation ensures that the foundation's good work continues in perpetuity, offering lessons in long-term planning and sustainability to other philanthropists. It's only been in the last few years that the CFGH has been able to establish the beginnings of endowed funds to support the community.

**LL #7: Cross-Sector Impact:** The CFGH has supported many varied causes, demonstrating the value of a holistic approach to community support and improvement.

**LL 8#: Collective Engagement:** The CFGH has shown how combining the resources of individuals, families, and businesses can lead to transformative community change.

**LL #9: Stewardship:** Careful management of donated funds teaches the importance of stewardship in philanthropy, ensuring the trust of donors and the effective use of charitable assets. We have been successfully established an outstanding CFGH leadership team and a fully engaged Board of Directors to guide the foundation's efforts.

### **Win With Integrity**

#### **Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207**

This life experience summarizes how I applied my military win planning skills, during my 4-year influence (2013–2016), helping Monterey County in California become the first and only **major oil-producing County** in America to legally block hydraulic oil fracking

operations within its jurisdiction. Fact: the San Ardo oil field near the southern boundary of Monterey County is one of California’s largest oil fields.



San Ardo oil field as seen from Highway-101

**Step 1: Understand the Mission Objective and Timeline:** In 2013, I was the only citizen at the scheduled Board of Supervisors weekly public meeting. There, I witnessed a lawyer present Chevron Oil’s petition to the Board to approve a permit to conduct fracking in the southern portion of the County. Having prior knowledge of the dangers and damage of oil fracking to water sources in other states, I was shocked. I shook my head, realizing that an oil company planned to do fracking and store toxic fracking wastewater underground near the single source of water (the Salinas River) flowing through and irrigating the Salad Bowl of America. Nothing in the lawyer’s pitch hinted at any risks to local families or the agriculture industry in Salinas Valley.



A typical farm in the 125-mile-long Salad Bowl of America

Believing that fracking near the Salinas River and the San Andreas earthquake zone was the worst place in America to do oil fracking, I left the chamber vowing to prevent fracking in our County. I intended to protect drinking water, farm workers, farmers, and the \$2B+ agriculture industry that fueled 74,000 local jobs. That became the strategic objective for myself and the eventual grassroots team that fought during the coming years and defeated the oil industry. The timeline was to start coalition building immediately and get an initiative before the voters by November 2016, when many would vote for a new President.

**Step 2: Know the Enemy:** In 2013, I researched and studied the strategy and tactics the oil industry used in politically defeating other grassroots organizations from Pennsylvania to California who resisted oil fracking in their communities. Repeatedly, the oil industry did the following:

- ✓ Claimed that the extremist anti-fracking **fringe** wanted to stop **ALL oil operations** within the County.
- ✓ Claimed stopping oil operations would **dry up millions of tax dollars** annually spent on local schools and roads.
- ✓ Claimed stopping oil operations would eliminate **thousands of local jobs**.
- ✓ **Lied** about or downplayed how hundreds of thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals used to frack oil fields would be stored **underground, safely** away from any water aquifer.
- ✓ Avoided talks about **increased truck traffic**, vehicle accidents, road damage, and methane odor affecting local businesses.
- ✓ Spent **millions of dollars** purchasing TV, radio, and political mailings to denigrate the grassroots organizations while influencing media agencies to **NOT broadcast debates**.
- ✓ The oil lobby's strengths included being a confident, experienced engagement team.
- ✓ The oil lobby's weaknesses were that they were cocky that they would win again and expected the Monterey County grassroots group would make the same **messaging mistakes and fight the same way** as dozens of previous loser anti-fracking groups.

**Step 3: Know the Battlefield:** Studying previous oil company wins revealed the following battle areas:

- The Initiative, where the title would be controlled by political allies of the oil industry, while the petition's wording would be controlled by our anti-fracking team
- The Physical area, composed of five voting districts
- The Public forum:
  - TV, radio, and political flyers used to influence voters
  - The Internet for grassroots communication with voters
  - Public debates sprinkled across the County
- The Legal Domain where District and Superior Courts would judge legal challenges or appeals before and after the voters passed the initiative.
- The Congressional Domain to Influence State Assembly and Senate representatives.

**Step 4: Know the Weather:** Not an issue in California.

**Step 5: Assess Engagement Options:**

A majority on the Board of Supervisors would block any fracking restrictions. So, this would be a public political fight against a bulldozer opponent who had money and lawyers and wouldn't go down unless the voters passed an initiative to block fracking.

**Step 6: Assess Team Strengths and Weaknesses:**

We didn't have a team. I co-founded Protect Monterey County (PSM) to ban fracking. We then established five subordinate district teams to get the vote out in each voting district. That core team grew to 230 volunteers. We sought and gained planning and legal support from state and national organizations such as Food and Water Watch, the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Sierra Club.





Mitchell (in cowboy hat) and other 2016 stop-fracking citizens

Our major strength was that we knew what to expect from a large organization that was likely to be slow or unable to quickly adjust to fighting a surprising counter-attack. We also had honest, dedicated teammates who would not lie to the public.

We had two weaknesses. Our major weakness was we would never match the campaign funding that the oil industry would deploy. We gathered \$220,000 to pay our lawyers and cover some campaign costs. Plus, individuals spent their own money in their districts. So, we had to conduct a low-cost media fight on the Internet. The oil companies deployed \$5.7 million.

Our second weakness would be controlling and focusing activists that wanted to kill all oil operations. We had to convince them not to drag us into fighting the type of battle that Big Oil would win.

### **Step 7 & 8: Assess What Could Go Wrong & What You Need to Know**

We could have key team and district leaders get sick or be forced to focus on family/business issues. So, we needed good backups. Plus, angry, blabber-mouth team members could be recorded for TV or radio, putting the initiative in a bad light. We needed trained or experienced reps to be our spokesmen or spokeswomen. Also, Big Oil could buy spies to join our team and report back to the oily crew. (A little humor goes a long way in tough political engagements.) Oily. . . get it?

### Step 9: Craft your Win Plan:

Soon after starting PSM, I shifted from leadership to being the grassroots win-the-initiative strategist and chief debater. In that capacity, I shared my research, win plan logic, and specific battlefield tactics with the lawyers and national environmental organizations. My win-the-initiative input was as follows:

- ❖ We will lobby the Board of Supervisors and the public to have a **moratorium on fracking** between now and the Presidential election on 9 November 2016, when many voters will vote on our initiative.
- ❖ We will **frame the engagement** as self-serving Big Oil was threatening the agriculture workers, families, and the annual \$2B+ Ag industry in the Salad Bowl of America.
- ❖ We will inform thousands of voters that hydraulic fracking would impact them personally because Big Oil was putting at risk 74,000+ direct and indirect Ag industry jobs. For example, **imagine losing the job you've had for years** driving farm tractors, working in packing plants, or transporting vegetables back East.
- ❖ We will **NOT stop existing oil operations** that have functioned since 1947 when the San Ardo oil field began pumping oil. That would be stated on the **first page** of the initiative, which many voters would read. Thus, there would be **no adverse tax reduction** to annual school budgets and road maintenance. Plus, there would be no loss of existing oil industry jobs.
- ❖ This win action caused a big battle within our founding group by members who wanted to close down all “carbon-emitting” sources in the valley. I settled those voices by explaining we needed to win the hydraulic fracking battle, and then, if they wanted, the no-carbon crew could fight that follow-on battle. However, when the oil industry lawyer team invited me in to discuss the upcoming initiative, I used the no-carbon desire as part of our **deception plan**. When they offered me a job on the oil team, I told the truth about the no-carbon members’ belief that this was the time to close down Big Oil in the Salinas Valley.
- ❖ We will **frame the engagement** that the Salinas Valley is the worst place in America to do fracking. It is stupid and dangerous to store toxic hydraulic wastewater underground near the single source of water (the Salinas River) flowing through the Salad Bowl of America. Plus, it is stupid to threaten future generations forever. It is especially stupid given that fracking triggers earthquakes, as reported by the United

States Geological Survey, and the proposed fracking and underground storage will occur in the most earthquake-area in California near the San Andreas fault.

- ❖ Many of our team said the above was good, but “Big Oil representatives would just lie!” I responded, “Yes, and **we want them to lie** so we can videotape them lying and then share that with the public to damage our opponent’s credibility.”
- ❖ We will engage cost-effectively. For example, we can cheaply videotape debates, then share those videos and discuss the dangers of fracking on Facebook and Our Neighborhood bulletin boards. Thus, we minimize paying for TV and radio ads. Plus, we will have hundreds of volunteers knocking on voter doors in the five districts.

### **Engagement Results**

In 2015, we got all seven members of the County Planning Commission to agree to a moratorium on fracking permits. However, by a 3 to 2 vote, the Board of Supervisors, rejected the moratorium. Despite that setback, we gained widespread visibility about the dangers of fracking to the farming industry.

However, that same year, a Monterey County Superior Court judge overturned an environmental impact report for fifteen fracking test wells because it did not address the “full project” impacts on the Salinas water basin, “known to be over-drafted north of King City.” Thus, a legal moratorium did occur.

In 2016, during my first debate against the oil industry’s paid spokesman, he walked into the ambush I had set, including videotaping the event.

He lied about the initiative, claiming it would close down all oil operations and lose tax money for schools and repairing local roads.

I responded, holding up a copy of the initiative and then reading the second paragraph on page 1. “This Initiative does not prohibit oil and gas operations . . . from using **existing oil and gas wells in the County**, which number over 1,500 at the time this Initiative was submitted . . .”



24-hours-a-day methane burn-off in West Texas

Similarly, I knocked down each of the rep’s points. For example, after the oil rep poo-pooed any adverse effects from fracking on the wine industry, I countered by saying that the stinging smell of burning methane in South County would not go well with wine tourists sipping Merlot on the outdoor patio. The crowd clapped after that comment.

The ambush was so bloody for the \$450-an-hour oil rep that he never debated me again during the Yes-on-Z initiative effort. Later, on 9 November 2016, 56% of the voters passed the initiative. We won a Super Bowl-level battle! We banned fracking near our water resources. Here’s one quote aired on local TV about our win:

“David beat Goliath in Monterey County’s stunning victory against oil industry pollution,” said Kassie Siegel of the Center for Biological Diversity. “Despite spending millions, oil companies couldn’t suppress this grassroots campaign. This triumph against fracking will inspire communities across California and the whole country to stand up to this toxic industry.”

Of course, the oil industry appealed, and our lawyers countered the legal challenges rising from the local court up to the Superior Court of California. The result was that the courts confirmed that the County could make zoning decisions about **where** oil operations could occur. However, the Superior Court said the County could not override the extraction technology used. The state and federal authorities had that jurisdiction.

After the Superior Court’s decision, the battle shifted within the walls of the State capital. There, our grassroots group and legal reps explained that citizens had the commonsense right to decide whether or not to live by a dangerous industrial operation threatening the public, water sources, and the agriculture industry.

The political and legal decision appeared on 25 September 2024, when Assembly Bill AB-3233 was approved, specifically stating that a “local entity” (meaning the County Board of Supervisors) could make limitations or prohibitions related to the **methods and locations** of oil and gas operations or development that could negatively impact people or the environment.

Thus, Protect Monterey County’s Super Bowl win, to block fracking, was legally added to the State Constitution.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Here is a saying I have used to lead or motivate civilian teams: We protect what we value.



Looking south into the Salinas Valley

When you become a civilian, you may experience a time when you are dissatisfied with something going on in your neighborhood or community that goes against your personal values or what you value. Then, you need to choose what protective measures you will take. Will you donate money and cheer from the sidelines, will you take a subordinate role on a neighborhood team, or will you step forward and lead?

If you choose to lead, be aware you may be in for a multi-year, expensive, frustrating, and tiring battle that you may win or lose.

**LL #2:** Military skills often apply to civilian challenges. When a challenge arises, think back to your days in the military and see what you can leverage. Thus, you will not start from scratch to accomplish the civilian task.

**LL #3:** You will bump into people who are not truthful in civilian organizations — however, both the customer and the general public respect the truth. Voters especially do

not trust liars trying to win an elected position, an initiative, or gain project approval from County or State officials.

**LL #4:** Technology is surfacing new and cheaper ways to communicate one's message. Hunt for and use emerging communication highways to augment or go around expensive traditional TV, radio, and mail outlets.

## Category: Decisiveness

### Be Bold

Lucas (Luke) Brennecke C-3 29037

Early in my civilian career as a toxicological pathologist, I was asked if I knew anything about evaluating some specific experimental medical devices. Without misleading the developer, I assured them I could do a creditable job. That eventually led to a successful career and national and international recognition as an expert in medical device pathology.

**Lesson Learned:** Be bold in the face of inexperience! Just because you have not been specifically trained or have not had experience in a specific task does not mean that you cannot do it and do it well.

### Civilian Leadership

Robert (Bob) Thomas D-2 28832

In 1980, I was a newly minted regional manager at my Fortune 500 company. I was living life large with my family in California. That's when my boss called and asked me to move to the East Coast to replace the incumbent regional manager. The problem was that the east region (our largest revenue producer) had not embraced a new sales/marketing initiative just introduced across the enterprise, and positive results were not there.

My family and I made a hurried house-hunting trip east, and I reluctantly accepted the assignment. I say reluctantly because we were trading Pacific breezes for East Coast humidity.

We moved, and I jumped into the new job with both feet. I found a staff unclear about the mission and the strategies and tactics associated with the new initiative. I made several joint calls with my staff to critical customers. Based on the intelligence I gathered, I created a clear mission statement with understandable strategies and tactics to support it. I continued to invest a lot of time to assist my staff. So much time that my wife became a single parent for a while. The net result was that my region finished first in the nation in effective program implementation.

**Lessons learned:**

**LL #1:** Establish a clearly defined objective based on the current situation.

**LL #2:** State clearly understood activities (strategies and tactics) to support the attainment of the objective.

**LL #3:** Supervise! Supervise! Supervise.

**LL #4:** The leadership traits learned as a cadet, a Ranger, and a company grade officer are directly applicable for guiding and accomplishing civilian operations.

### **Information Paralysis**

**John M. Holm C-4 29323**

As a young manager in a large aerospace company, I was always dealing with incomplete information. There was one more document I needed, or an additional question answered, or a report that didn't seem to exist. I felt I required all of this information to make the best-informed decision. I never had enough.

However, this was rarely ever the case. It just seemed like that to me. The point is that you can become so hung up with feeling you can't make an informed decision — that you don't make any decision at all, which is far worse.

There is a corollary to this You can have so much information that you can't see the forest for the trees. Put another way, you get lost in the data, confused by what you are looking at, or so overwhelmed with everything that you can't decide what to do.

**Lesson Learned:** Should you find yourself in either of these conditions, consider that if it were a combat situation, you never have the luxury of time. So, observe, assess, decide, and move on!

### **Deliver It**

**Frank J. Monaco B-4 29134**

After leaving the Army, I became the Higher Education Chief Information Officer (CIO) at Pace University. Early on, I established a slogan/motto to clarify the performance goals of my division. Everything we did for our customers had to meet the test of these three broad criteria: Effective, Efficient, and Innovative, where effective and efficient were paramount. That motto served me, my team, and our customers well during my 11 years at the university.

As an example of innovation, the employees in my Division of Information Technology selected the "Take the Message to Garcia Award" to be issued each quarter. A member of our staff would be awarded a plaque by his fellow employees for best exemplifying the characteristics of General Rowan in E. Hubbard's 1899 essay about the Spanish-American War, titled A Message to Garcia.

**Lesson Learned:** Hubbard wrote: "The point I wish to make is this: [President] McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter and did not ask, 'Where is he at?' By the Eternal! There is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college of the land. It is not book-learning young men need, nor instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of the vertebrae which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies: do the thing — 'Carry a message to Garcia!'

I'm proud to say that the Pace University IT division effectively, efficiently, and with innovation delivered the messages we were assigned to deliver.

### **Winning Over a Challenging Audience**

**John Norton Jr. B-3 29307**



In January 1994, I began a project with Dr. John Simmons from Participation Associates in Chicago for the World Bank in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This was a half-million-dollar World Bank project training 60 Senior Kazakh business leaders from the agriculture and textile industries about Western management principles and business planning.

We also oversaw the selection process, where 20 Kazakh leaders from each industry were chosen to participate in a month-long study tour traveling to Taiwan and the United States. The tour would allow the selectees to observe closely what some of the best Taiwanese textile and U.S. agriculture organizations were doing to be successful.

John and I were both eager to get off to a good start and spent extensive time preparing in the U.S. before arriving in Almaty. In fact, I took eight weeks of Russian refresher training with a coach in Rockville, MD.

One of our biggest concerns was how to begin the seminar in a way that would get our group of senior Kazakh large-factory CEOs engaged from the start. The night before, John and I brainstormed how to structure the workshop.

Since we both had done previous workshops leveraging ideas in Stephen Covey's book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, we decided to do that again. After several hours, we had shaped most of the sessions. However, how to do the introduction was not decided, and it was getting late when John told me I would kick off the program.

Knowing I was the lead-off facilitator prevented me from getting a good night's rest. Around 5 am the next morning, I prayerfully continued to search out how we should begin, when it came to me clear as day. *Use Covey's 5<sup>th</sup> Habit: "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."*

We would begin the program by asking the participants what was the most important thing they did to be effective leaders in their business. Thus, we would start the program by having them teach us.

When I shared my approach with John at breakfast, he was elated. He agreed it was a perfect way to get their attention and engagement. On the way to the training classroom, I briefed our translator on how we planned to introduce the program and the role we needed her to take. She would translate and capture the keywords and ideas of the leaders on a flipchart.

After our World Bank representative introduced us and described the bank's commitment to the program, we quickly had each participant introduce himself. They were definitely a hard-core group, seasoned by years of working under very authoritarian Soviet-style leadership.

Then, it was my turn. I began by speaking in Russian, expressing my interest in working with and learning from them. I had rehearsed for some time what I would say

and I could tell by their faces that they were surprised that I was speaking their language and looking each of them in the eye as I moved around the room. They were used to being lectured to and ordered to perform in specific ways. What I was doing was very different from anything they were used to in a Soviet-style classroom.

**Lesson Learned 1:** I explained that we greatly respected them as the senior leaders of their organizations and that they were already effective leaders in their own right. So, to begin, we wanted to learn from them “what was the most important thing that made them effective as leaders of their organizations.” After that, John and I would share what made leaders and managers effective in the West.

Our interpreter explained that they would work for the next 15 to 20 minutes in smaller 7 to 8 person groups where they would share what was the most important thing that made them effective leaders. After they finished sharing, we had each small group take turns explaining their practice or principle with the whole group.

Although they initially expressed surprise and uncertainty about the assignment, they all enthusiastically participated, even taking notes on each other's ideas. It provided the perfect catalyst we had hoped for to kick off the program and win over the audience. After they saw we were genuinely interested in their different approaches, they seemed eager to learn what we would share with them.

We didn't fully appreciate the impact of this opening approach until the final night's banquet for the week. In one of the toasts made by one of the senior Kazakh leaders, he said, “I propose a toast to our excellent instructors from America, who from the opening moments of our program had us in the palm of their hand, by caring enough and taking the time to hear from us what we thought made us good leaders, and from there they built the rest of their program.”

**Lesson Learned 2:** Although not many will ever face trying to win over an audience of businessmen in Kazakhstan, I believe the principle that worked with this audience will work with almost any audience.

## Chapter 7 — Family Life



The three categories in this chapter present experiences and lessons learned by mothers, spouses, parents, caregivers, widows and widowers of a West Point graduate when dealing with family issues.

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### Category: Parenting

#### **Deployment Grandmothers** **Wife Kris Harper D-3 w 29104**

During one of my husband's deployments in 1992, General Reimer, the FORSCOM commander and future Chief of Staff of the Army, visited Fort Lewis. LTG Cavezza, the Corps commander, hosted a reception for him to which I was invited. Unfortunately, I had a conflict; my Girl Scout meeting met at the same time. I knew what I had to do; there wasn't much of a dilemma. I decided to slip into the party unobtrusively after the scout meeting. I figured no one would notice my absence or late arrival. How wrong could I be!

As I quietly entered through the front door, there stood the two generals, as if in wait, and LTG Cavezza said, in a loud, booming voice, "And here is Kris Harper now!" *So much for unobtrusive!*, I thought.

GEN Reimer approached me with an outstretched hand and asked me how everything was going. With LTG Cavezza giving me cues from behind GEN Reimer's

back, I apologized for being late, offered the excuse that I was at a Girl Scout meeting, and responded that everything was well. He then asked me what was your families' biggest challenge during these back-to-back-to-back deployments.

I responded that when my husband deployed, three of the young women in the headquarters left behind babies less than three months old, and the young dads were just not prepared to meet the responsibilities of their full-time jobs and care for an infant.

Since both the generals had been commissioned and risen in rank in a combat arms branch, and women were not permitted in combat arms until 2013, this was not the answer these men were anticipating. By the time they had women in their units, they were both too senior to have dealt with the trials faced by active-duty moms with small children. Their mouths fell open. One asked what I was doing to solve the problem.

**Lesson Learned:** Very early in the deployment, I realized we had a problem. I asked some of the wives of senior officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs), who were also senior in age if they would act as surrogate grandmothers. Then, we provided each young dad with two or three seasoned grandmothers to call on if they needed help, regardless of the time of day or night. This solution provide the assistance the dads needed, and it brought them to the family support group meetings and activities, which they hadn't been attending prior to the grandmothers' invitations. As an additional bonus, the grandmothers had a little baby to cuddle and spoil.

## **Mom's Teachings**

**Tom Devito D-2 28968**

Recently, my bride of over 52 years and I published our Life Stories to pass on to our family members. I want to pass on 12 **proven lessons** I learned from my mother, Katherine Devito:

- #1** Don't lose contact with your family members. They are very important.
- #2** Always say "Please" and "Thank You".
- #3** Wash your hair with your fingertips, not your fingernails. You'll have it for a lot longer.
- #4** Remember people's birthdays.
- #5** Be able to keep a secret.
- #6** Don't cheat.

- #7 Be kind to animals.
- #8 Put the toilet lid down.
- #9 Respect the Police.
- #10 Try to remember people's names.
- #11 Don't get sunburned.
- #12 Budget your time so you can finish a task on time.

### **Good Ages**

**David Trammel B-2 28978**

This lesson comes from my parenting experience. My wife Debra would tell you I have said it many times. I learned this with my two daughters and a granddaughter that we raised.

**Lesson Learned:** Enjoy all the ages and stages of your children's lives. As special as a particular age may be, I never wanted to hold my girls back because I knew the next stage would have its unique joys and rewards. I will add that this doesn't mean that all has been perfect and wonderful. There has been trouble and even heartbreak, but the lesson holds. Don't try to hold a child back or freeze them at a certain point. It's an idea worth passing on to any young parent.

### **Pop's Philosophy**

**James (Sully) Sullivan I-4 29460**

It is June, 2024. To my children: I love you eight and all your offspring with all my heart and soul. I could not be prouder of you. So, I present to you these gleanings, the fruit of my observation for 72 years. Most I gathered plus a few I made, that seem to hold true in all seasons and weather. I will add to them as life goes on. I hope you will, too.

#### **Laws of Life - The First Laws**

- ❖ The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you:
- ❖ The Second Rule: Pride goes before trouble, and a haughty spirit goes before a fall.

## Engineering

- ✓ If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
- ✓ Nature loves a balance and abhors a vacuum.
- ✓ Start with reverse engineering from equilibrium. Begin with the truth.
- ✓ The most useful tool of engineering is dimensional analysis.
- ✓ Thermodynamics: Everything tends to run down.

## Finance

- Capital: Make sure it's enough, and deploy it vigorously.
- Business Finance: Take the cash now.
- Economics: There is no free lunch.
- Two reasons for money: to help with romance, or to get out of trouble.
- Opportunity cost is the most important cost.
- Banks lend time, not money. You must prove you don't need a loan, to qualify for a loan.
- Accounting:  $\text{Assets} + \text{expenses} = \text{revenues} - \text{liabilities} + \text{equity}$ .
- Selling = Empathy.
- Money is imaginary.
- Leave big tips.
- Real Estate - Location, location, location

## Women

- ❖ The First Law of Women: All is unknown.
- ❖ It does not occur to most women to doubt their abilities.
- ❖ On The Sexes: Girls decorate; Boys get sticks.
- ❖ Regarding Women's Looks: All women are good-looking to somebody.
- ❖ Women are fractal; babies have babies have babies . . .
- ❖ If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.
- ❖ All men's mothers are saints, wives are knockouts, and daughters are virgins.
- ❖ Beware the low-maintenance woman.

## Men

- ✓ The First Law of Men: Food.
- ✓ Beware high-maintenance men.
- ✓ Don't trust a man who hides behind his wife and children.
- ✓ 95% of all men doubt their abilities.
- ✓ 99% of all men are in need of leadership.
- ✓ On The Sexes: Boys get sticks, girls decorate.

## Love

- Love is the union of wills: (this is not a definition).
- Love is the only reality. All else is interpreted.
- However, you find it, it's good.
- Success is loving and being loved.
- Love is the opposite of Fear.
- On Lovers: One is enough, two is way too many.
- On Friendship: Judge not.
- Difficult people need love, but act difficult to deflect it.

## Character

- ❖ Three sure tests of character:
  - i. How you treat those who can't harm or benefit you.
  - ii. How you behave when no one is looking.
  - iii. What you do on your **THIRD** try.
- ❖ *In medio stat virtus*, means: in the middle stands virtue.
- ❖ Beware of:
  - i. High maintenance men.
  - ii. Low maintenance women.
  - iii. A man who hides behind his wife and children.
  - iv. People who look up and to the right when remembering. (It is a neurolinguistic trait that the person is lying or trying to deceive you.)

- v. People who are Stupid AND Stubborn
- vi. People who don't know, and don't know they don't know.
- vii. The frozen snake, that will thaw and bite you.
- viii. Ism's.
- ❖ Be humble and gentle in victory, stern and unyielding in defeat.
- ❖ Do the harder right versus the easier wrong
- ❖ It is always better to do something because it is the right thing to do.
- ❖ Gentleness and sense of humor are the results of confidence.
- ❖ Confidence comes from a well-developed consciousness.

### Success

- ✓ The most important determiner of success for an enterprise is setting the original RAM goals: **R**easonable, **A**ttainable, **M**easurable.
- ✓ You can go a long way if you don't mind that others think you're stupid.
- ✓ More success happens if you are 15 minutes early.
- ✓ Wealth is being able to dictate how you spend your moments.
- ✓ You learn a lot more from your failures than from your successes
- ✓ When Wing-walking, before you let go of what you've got, get your hand on something new.

### Human Nature

- The three gifts one can always bestow: admiration, affection, understanding.
- Good judgment comes from experience; experience comes from bad judgment.
- There are two real sins: contempt and insincerity.
- When people behave vehemently, look for what they are compensating for.
- Overt anomalies mask covert conflicts.
- We don't have emotions; they have us.
- In the end, people will do what they really want.
- Type-A behavior shows two things: generalized, unfocused hostility; impatience with time.



- The reason for Type-A behavior is the lack of unconditional affection and admiration from parents.
- On Aging: These ARE the good old days.
- On Booze: Never chase a buzz; humans get only one buzz per waking period.
- On Trouble: What won't make you laugh won't make you cry.

### Working

- ❖ Medicine is more than a pill. Do no harm. Then Cure sometimes, Ameliorate often, Comfort always.
- ❖ If one wishes to “prescribe” for others, one must graduate from “medical school.”
- ❖ When Flying: never take a chance you don't have to.
- ❖ On Baseball: See the ball, hit the ball.
- ❖ On Lawyers: They always know the answer before they ask the question.
- ❖ On Detectives: Cui bono (To whom the good) - who collects?

### Fate

- ✓ On the Pendulum: It swings not between “Right” and “Wrong” but between “Order” and “Chaos.”
- ✓ You have to go out in the street to get hit by the Good Luck Truck.
- ✓ Only a few people use their scouts, and they excel.
- ✓ Controlling both cause and effect is unhealthy.
- ✓ The country is the family, only expanded.
- ✓ You create your moment. Who else?
- ✓ Good judgment comes from experience; experience comes from bad judgment.
- ✓ Once you commit, the universe conspires to give you your wish.

### Tools

- Backward planning.
- The 4 management steps: **Plan, Organize, Implement, Control.**

- Meditation.
- Socrates's Three Laws:
- Know thyself
- Moderation in all things
- Know all the gods and goddesses.
- Our brain can't distinguish between reality and a vividly imagined event.

### **Adulthood**

- ❖ Maturity is deferred gratification.
- ❖ Adult comes from Latin, "no longer pure."
- ❖ The hallmark of alcoholism is inappropriate behavior.
- ❖ Inappropriate behavior can be summoned by inappropriate language.
- ❖ The essence of alcoholism is, "I want what I want, when I want it."
- ❖ The key to recovery from alcoholism is choosing need over want.

### **Paradox**

- ✓ All victories are tainted.
- ✓ Surrender and win.
- ✓ Slow is smooth; smooth is fast.

### **Transcendence**

- Transcendent concepts can only be referred to, not defined. Language fails.
- Math = philosophy.
- Engineering = music.
- Proper Art consists of:
  - i. *Integritas*: oneness.
  - ii. *Consonantia*: harmony.
  - iii. *Claritas*: Esthetic arrest.
- Opposite of Hate is Faith.
- Feeling turns the hypothetical into the real.
- Beauty is the gateway to being.

- Rhythm is the instrument of beauty.

## Communication & Language

- ❖ The root of conflict is language: in our choice of words, inflection, tone, and nuance.
- ❖ Inappropriate language usually summons inappropriate behavior.
- ❖ *Un affronto es un affront:* An affront is an affront.
- ❖ Extremes of language reflect inner uncertainty.
- ❖ Baby: talk and artificial language indicate a contrived or insincere situation.
- ❖ Comedy is someone else falling in a hole and breaking their neck; tragedy is you stubbing your toe.
- ❖ Repeated wrong use of a word points to hubris.
- ❖ Keep jokes short.
- ❖ Clarity above all.
- ❖ On Conversation: We talk about the third best things: the best are transcendent, the second best only refers to transcendent, the third best, we speak.
- ❖ On Supervision: Speak in Headlines.

## Tactics

- ✓ Always maintain the element of surprise, even after you have surprised them.
- ✓ A miracle is a 3-degree shift in perception.
- ✓ Watch and hope for the golden moment. When you see it, seize it.
- ✓ Identify the impossible, and turn it into a goal.
- ✓ Spontaneous, new solutions herald the paradigm shift.
- ✓ Deliver more than promised: 100% and then some.
- ✓ Think about serving, whenever you can.
- ✓ Satisfy a need, BEFORE it is demanded.
- ✓ Politeness is powerful because it gives you basis.
- ✓ Make friends with the receptionist.
- ✓ If you EXPERIENCE it, or KNOW it, you don't HAVE to believe it.
- ✓ When you are surest about something, ask "Could I have this wrong?"

- ✓ Never agree with one of a married couple, in criticizing the other. People make up.
- ✓ Those who keep the problem want the position that goes with the problem.
- ✓ Don't ask someone you love to trust you.
- ✓ Don't give life to speculation about evil.
- ✓ On Public Speaking: Joke, point, joke, point, conclude.
- ✓ The higher law takes precedence.

## **Helping a Kid**

### **Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207**

From 2019 into 2023, I mentored a friend's great-great-grandson who had interaction issues with teachers and other adults. His name is Uriah.

Unfortunately, he was in the California school system, which passes students along even when they do not meet learning requirements for the grade they are in. Thus, those students fall farther and farther behind in their learning when they move into a higher grade because they have not mastered the basics of a subject taught in the earlier grade.

I was told he was a troubled child, as some people said of me when I was a youth. Luckily, a skilled social worker got me away from the woman battering me and into a good foster home.

In Uriah's case, he didn't have a mother using a broom handle on him. Instead, she worked two jobs to house and feed him, leaving her without the time or energy to regularly read books to him before he was five years old. So, he did not naturally absorb the love of learning, the joy of intriguing stories, or eagerly wanting to know what was on the next page.

When I was informed that the fourteen-year-old was staying alone during the summer when his mom worked, I knew that was a disaster waiting to occur. So, like those adults who helped me, I offered to keep the teenager busy working on my small ranch.

It wasn't easy during the first year. I had to figure out what he was scared of, what he knew he did not know, what his frustrations were, what triggered him into defensive behavior, and what he wanted to achieve.

Cracking jokes, explaining I was training him to work like I was taught, and giving him positive feedback cooled down his negative attitude and slowly built trust between us.

One accomplishment was getting him to read his first book from beginning to end. It was my 362-page action-packed thriller titled *Black Camel*. After reading five pages, I had

him answer three comprehension questions. But I didn't use the evil word "test." I called them challenge questions. He got a dollar for each correct answer.

After reading an entire chapter, I had him write a one-page challenge about what he recently read. The exercise taught him how to repeatedly use a simple formula to answer history, science, or English questions at school. In the chapter challenges, he would receive two dollars for each part he crafted correctly.

Yes, to most of his peers, the following formula was a simple technique. But to him, it washed away big unknowns, provided him with a tool to succeed, and boosted his confidence the more he used it. The formula had three parts as taught at the Academy:

**#1 Opening** paragraph: Tell the reader what you're going to tell them.

**#2 Body** paragraphs: Tell the reader examples or facts.

**#3 Conclusion:** Tell the reader what you told them and why.

I also trained him to work on my small ranch by listening to task instructions, receiving praise for what he did well, and accepting feedback on what could have been completed better. Plus, I docked him a dollar out of his day's pay for leaving one of my tools lying around instead of putting it back where he got it.

During the work training, I had him practice the trick of "positive magic words" to control adults [ yes ma'am, yes sir, thank you, etc. ]. Along the way, I also explained how negative magic words would automatically turn people off, anger them, decide he was disrespectful, or cause them to not give a damn about him. Words like: screw you, I don't care, and this is stupid. Plus, it was his choice of what type of words he used and what effect he would trigger.

The multi-year results:

- I and his girlfriend were major influencers on his change of behavior to strive to graduate.
- Uriah chose to perform better at the school for kids "too difficult" to be allowed in regular high school classrooms.

- Instead of sitting around bored just waiting to go home each day, he strove to pass classroom challenges and gained a passing grade on most of his school work.
- He already landed a job at the Tesla automobile assembly plant in Fremont, California.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Good parents significantly shape their child's character during the first five years of life by:

- ✓ Regularly reading to them
- ✓ Teaching them the alphabet and how to spell simple words like dog, cat, etc.
- ✓ Teaching them to count to 100.

**LL #2:** Paying it forward because of a past kindness isn't always a planned thing.

**LL #3:** It's a great feeling seeing a wounded kid turn his or her life around and achieve a chosen goal. But it can be a lot of hard work for the kid and for anyone trying to help them.

### **Postscript**

We attended Uriah's high school graduation, on 31 May 2023.



Uriah Martinez with his Great Grandmother

## **My Child's Anxiety**

**Wife Kris Harper D-3 w29104**

My husband and I have three children – two boys and a girl. Our oldest son attended ten schools while traveling from Army base to Army base before graduating from high school, and he wasn't good dealing with change. The last place was always the best place. Every move was a traumatic life event for him, and, at one point, he threatened to run away and return to the city of our previous assignment if we made him move. Our daughter was the polar opposite. She hated to leave her friends but could hardly wait to get to the next place – to meet the kids, find out what new activities were available, and what the new house and school were like. She was every military parent's dream child! Our youngest son took his cues from his older siblings and reflected the attitude of whichever was closest at hand.

Moving to new locations, entering new schools, and fitting in with new kids was also complicated with Dad not being around. While we were assigned to Fort Lewis for two years, from the summer of 1991 to the summer of 1993, my husband was deployed or on extended temporary duty for 17 months. Never before or since have we experienced that kind of deployment schedule.

My husband took command of a brigade in Saudi Arabia in July and returned the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. We had a wonderful holiday season together, only to see him depart on TDY in January. He returned briefly in the spring of 1992 and was gone again for several weeks in the summer. In September, he left for REFORGER and seven weeks in Germany. He came home for Thanksgiving and deployed again on Christmas Eve to Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. He returned home at the end of May, just three weeks before the movers came for our next PCS.



The Harper family, 1991: Husband Gil, wife Kris;  
children top-step to bottom:  
Jonathan, Betsy, and Matthew.

The kids were 11, 8, and 4 years old when we arrived at Ft Lewis about a week before school started in August. Our oldest had the most challenging time. He wouldn't join Scouts because all the other boys had a dad to go camping and do the projects with them. He wouldn't join sports because Dad wasn't there to practice with. Our daughter plunged right in. On the first day of third grade, she came home with a gaggle of girlfriends and plans for the afternoon. She joined Girl Scouts and some of the other activities on post. Our youngest started pre-K and made friends with the little boy next door. I found a part-time job at Army Community Service and devoted the rest of my time to my family and the Brigade family support group.

Every time my husband left, and then again when he returned, we reorganized our family unit. There were definitely challenges, but I never realized where the true challenge smoldered until a few years later.

In the spring of 1995, while preparing for the state exams at the end of the school year, I got a call from the middle school. Our daughter's English teacher wanted a conference and, she said, "It would be good if your husband could attend, as well." I was flabbergasted! Our daughter was an honor student who never caused a problem at home or school. She was the one I didn't have to worry about. I told the teacher I would, then



called my husband at the Pentagon and told him about the meeting. He was also shocked and arranged to be there the following day.

The problem was Betsy's homework. The assignment was to write about a childhood memory. She chose her father's deployment to Somalia on Christmas Eve. She wrote about how angry she was. She wrote about her father going "halfway around the world" to help children when his children needed him at home. She wrote about how she felt when the news cameras were in her face as she was trying to say goodbye; and how angry it made her when her mother smiled at all the soldiers and families. Most telling, she wrote about memorizing his face in case she never saw him again. All this time, I never knew the anger, the hurt, and the fear boiling beneath the smile on her face.

**Lesson Learned:** The lesson, however, is clear and still with me. Sometimes, the child who is not acting out, the one who is holding it in, needs more of our attention than the ones who are expressing their anger, hurt, and fears.

### **So, You Want To Be A Pilot**

**William (Bill) McBeth I-3 28758**

So, you or someone important to you, such as a grandchild, friend, or student, wants to become a pilot, doctor, nurse, engineer, or you name it, while garnering financial benefits, such as reduced or eliminated student debt, tuition assistance, and early contributions to a defined benefit retirement plan. Here's how I handled such a situation based upon graduating from the Academy, serving six years as a Regular Army Engineer, and 26 years in the Army Reserve, including 16 years as an army veterinarian.

In 1992, my youngest son Ian, then a high school junior, and I were sitting at the kitchen table late on a Friday night after he helped me work the local livestock auction. It was a part of my vet practice that involved a lot of work, both regulatory and physical animal handling and veterinary preventive care. As a young teenager, Ian had been exposed to a lot of hard ranch work and a couple of old WW II veterans and had developed a proclivity for profanity. The conversation that day went something like this:

Me: Ian, where are you going to go to college?

Ian: Dad, I ain't gonna go to no F-ing college!!

Me: Yes, you are.

Ian: Where the hell would I go?

Me: University of Wyoming!

Ian: What the F would I learn there?

Me: Range Management.

Ian: What the F is that?

Me: I'm not sure, but I know you will like it. (I pulled a lot of that out of thin air.)

Fast forward almost two years. Ian is accepted at UW, is enrolled in the range management curriculum, and working the summer on the same ranch he has worked on since he was 14. I'm holding a letter from the university, asking Ian to attend an orientation. I call Ian at the ranch and let him know:

Ian: Dad, we're real busy here! And I don't want to go to any F-ing orientation!

Me: Just hop in your pickup on Thursday. I'll meet you in Gering, Nebraska, and we'll drive together to Laramie.

Orientation starts well. Ian's advisor is the head of the Range Management Department at the College of Agriculture, and Ian meets a bunch of other incoming Ag students he cottons to. Meanwhile, I wander over to the Student Union to kill some time and discover a desk with Wyoming Army Guard soldiers from a helicopter ambulance company giving recruiting pitches. I knew several of the soldiers, having actually ridden with them while doing Army Vet Corps duty at Camp Guernsey – the regional Guard and Reserve training base.

When Ian and I meet up, the conversation goes something like this:

Me: Ian, there is a really high-speed Army Helicopter Ambulance Unit here recruiting. Lots of benefits – training, in-state tuition, tuition assistance, pay, etc

Ian: F that, Dad.

Me, to myself: *Bad idea. Won't push my luck!*

Fast forward to Christmas. Ian has been at the university for a semester. We hadn't heard a lot from him, which was not unusual. Ian arrives a bit underweight, pale, and has a soft bronchial cough.

Me: Ian, you look like shit!

Ian: Dad, I feel like shit. I finished 17 semester hours with a 3.8 GPA and ran indoor track which took up a couple hours a day. I'm not going back next semester!

Me: Oh?

Ian: Yup! I enlisted in the Wyoming Air Force Guard. They are gonna send me to basic training at Lackland AFB in Texas. Then, onto Construction Specialist School in Biloxi, Mississippi. There I'm gonna be trained as a carpenter, plumber, electrician, mason, and heavy equipment operator. Then I'm gonna be a construction specialist with the C-130 squadron in Cheyenne.

Me: Sounds exciting!

Ian: And then I'm going back to the University of Wyoming. This Guard deal has a lot of Bennies!

Me, to myself: *What an original idea, Ian!*

Me, to Ian: Sounds like a plan.

### **Long Story Short**

Ian executed his plan with the goal in mind of becoming a C-130 Pilot. He completed his training and became a structures specialist with the C-130 squadron. Plus, he went back to UW, completed a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Range Management,

During that journey, he walked onto the track team and asked the coach if he could beat the current 800-meter runners could he have a scholarship like they did. The coach agreed, and Ian soon received a track scholarship and competed for UW for the next three years.

With his scholarship, his tuition breaks, pay from the Guard, and part-time construction work he paid his own way through college. With his bachelor's degree, he applied for a pilot's slot with the C-130 Squadron. He couldn't see well enough to be a pilot but was accepted as a navigator. After attending OCS, he was commissioned, qualified as a navigator, and did several deployments to Iraq.

Along the way, with the military's financial assistance, he qualified as a private pilot, and then, as he neared his 29<sup>th</sup> birthday, he applied to be a pilot again. For some reason, he didn't have to see as well, was accepted into military pilot training and qualified. He flew with his Guard unit for many years, became a pilot evaluator and instructor, and earned six Air Medals for combat deployments.

## **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Over the course of my Army Veterinary career, I had the opportunity to observe that Ian's path to a pilot's career could be applied to other fields, including:

- ✓ Veterinary Medicine
- ✓ Dentistry
- ✓ Medicine
  - >> Physicians
  - >> Physician Assistant

**LL #2:** I also observed that this pathway – enlistment in the Guard or Reserve with the end goal of becoming an officer works well in lots of other fields. For example, my grandson Michael enlisted in the Army Guard while a junior in High School, trained as a heavy equipment operator, eventually became an Engineer Corps Officer through ROTC, and is now a full-time Major in the Alaska National Guard.

**LL #3:** Start Early – Time in Service has pay and retirement benefits.

**LL #4:** If you want to pilot a specific type of aircraft, enlist to serve in a Guard unit that has that aircraft. If you make it into pilot training, you will be trained to fly the craft of your unit. Academy and ROTC pilots do not have that luxury.

**LL #5:** The choice of an enlisted career field has many options; investigate them.

**LL #6:** Explore as many potential paths to your end goal as possible

- ✓ In Ian's case, he chose something that had little to do directly with piloting but was nevertheless a valuable life skill.
- ✓ However, in many cases, the choice of an enlisted career field that leads to your ultimate goal is an excellent choice. An excellent example would be enlisting to be a Veterinary Technician with the goal of serving in a Reserve or Guard unit while simultaneously pursuing a veterinary degree and ultimately a commission as a veterinary officer makes a lot of sense.
- ✓ Specialized fields such as medicine or dentistry may have additional pathways to reach your career goals, depending on the needs of the service

**LL #7:** Talk to recruiters while keeping an open mind.

**LL #8:** Military Service has lifetime benefits.

### **Mother-in-Law Test**

**Robert Werner H-4 29427**

Young men smitten with the charms of a fair maiden and contemplating marriage: Take a long, hard look at your future mother-in-law. Then, consider the reality that your fair damsel may morph into her mother lock, stock, and barrel that as the years unfold. Now, if that mere thought sends shivers up and down your spine and alarm bells ring in your ears - then by all means, heed the dire warning and spare yourself untold misery and heartache!

### **She's The One**

**Terry Johnson D-3 29347**

Four years after graduating from the Academy, I had been dating Virginia Wenzel, a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Army Nurse, for two weeks while at Fort Lewis when it dawned on me that she was the one! She is what I've always wanted — what am I waiting for? So, I set sail for her apartment around 11:30 p.m. hoping to catch her coming off her evening shift at Madigan Army Medical Center.

I didn't have a key to her apartment, and we barely knew each other, but I was going to propose if I didn't chicken out. As I paced the sidewalk outside her apartment, with no sight of her, I prayed to God to give me a sign, something to reinforce my intentions.

Midnight came with no Ginny. I wondered why she was not back. I got in my car and drove to the nearby Denny's restaurant at the exit off Interstate-5. I'd never been there before and had no idea why I was going there. When I walked in, I saw Ginny with several other nurses eating breakfast! Sure enough, I had received my sign in spades!

Back at her apartment I proposed, and she said yes! Five months later, on 3 August 1974, we married each other.



The Newly Wed Johnsons

**Lessons learned:**

**LL #1:** Trust your instincts. Despite our very short courtship, I knew Ginny was the right person because she believed in God and went to church, she had great values that paralleled my values, she wasn't afraid of the truth, I trusted whatever she said, she was mature, intelligent, hard-working, extremely caring, thoughtful when making decisions considering both emotions and just the facts, a long-range goal setter who wasn't a quitter, stunningly pretty, a great smile, all of which made me want her around me as a partner working together for the rest of our lives.

**LL #2:** Listen carefully when you ask God for something. The answer may be a silent urging.

As if that was not enough proof of divine help, while on the staff at West Point in 1984, Ginny was doing her two-week reserve duty at Fort Drum, New York. I convinced my sister and husband to come watch our three children so I could drive northwest 272 miles to see Ginny on the middle weekend. We didn't have cell phones then and I had never been to the Army base. Plus, I didn't know what building she was staying in. I drove

through the gate at Drum and pulled up outside a building I picked by chance. There were no signs indicating reserve housing. As I got out of the car, Ginny came out of the building! How I found her on the first try amazed me!

**Lessons re-Affirmed:**

**LL #1:** Trust your instincts.

**LL #2:** God is love and love conquers all, including a clueless Major wandering aimlessly in search of his wife.

**Postscript**

Just this month, we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary, and I know God put me on the right track when I met my love.

**Category: Caregiving**

**Dementia**

**Lawrence (Rock) Verrochi G-4 29222**

My life-defining event since graduating from the Academy was taking care of Debbie, my wife, during her battle with early-onset Alzheimer's and dementia.

Her diagnosis in 2010 was devastating, but her decline was slow and manageable. I felt pretty good about my care-taking ability until 1 June 2016. It was a sunny, comfortable day, and she was having a very good time. She went to bed about 7 p.m. feeling very tired. Around 10 p.m. I heard her walking about in our bedroom and went in to help.

I found her in the midst of a severe manic episode. It was the first time that she did not recognize me. Initially, I thought she was joking, but for the next 12 hours she argued, screamed, and fought with me. Eventually, she collapsed in sheer exhaustion and fell asleep.

Over the next two months, it was a roller coaster emotional challenge. I thank God for her few lucid moments when she was able to tell me something bad was happening to her. To control her mania, we had to use Haldol, which allowed her to relax and sleep.

I put her in hospice with the intent of weaning her off the drug. However, her body failed her, and she passed in her sleep on 31 July 2016. We were married for 42 years and had some rough patches. The bottom line is that our marriage was good for me, and I still pray it was good for her.

### **Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** You have more fortitude than you realize, usually drawn from your faith experience.

**LL #2:** Seek knowledge and ask for help.

**LL #3:** Take one day at a time, continue to grow and learn from your faith. For me I continue to attend Mass weekly and sometimes more. I prayed for the humility, the courage and the wisdom to follow the light of truth and seek the righteous path in order to make correct and proper decisions about my wife's health. When the end was near I prayed for the ability to accept God's plan and gain in character by setting the example for my family and friends to observe.

### **Eight Surgeries, One Caregiver**

**Donald (Don) Frazer D-2 29004**

The lessons learned that I offer at the end of this tale are based upon a lifetime of medical procedures that I have experienced into my 70s. They include 2 replaced knees, 2 replaced hips, 2 replaced shoulders, a 3-bone fusion in my back which was revised to a 5-bone fusion, and multiple other surgeries on my spine to relieve pain caused by stenosis (the abnormal narrowing in the spinal column). I am not a bionic man like Colonel Austin in the 1970s TV show. But, I am at least septonic. That's a word I contrived for undergoing my seventh right knee surgery. At this point, I suspect that when I croak, rather than going to a mortuary, my remains will be submitted to a scrapyard.

The following sequence of events relates specifically to the saga of my right knee.



**June 1948** – I was born with genetic material from my Mom and Pop, with the usual hereditary traits, some of which did not manifest in my physical makeup until much later in life.

**Fall 1966** – A physical exam for USMA Admissions revealed that I had scoliosis of the spine (Thanks, Mom), with a bonus of a demonstrated drop in my right shoulder. That drop was clearly displayed as I stood at attention against a life-sized grid of small squares. So, the tailors in the Uniform Factory at the Academy put additional padding in my dress uniforms to make my figure more symmetrical. Years later, x-ray assessments showed a pelvic tilt that produced a “longer” left leg, which placed additional stress on the joints of my spine and lower extremities.

**Summer 2005** – I was diagnosed with osteoarthritis (Thanks, Pop), with deterioration of several joints in my body, particularly in my spine, resulting in several surgeries to relieve intense pain in my back.

**January 2012** – Because of intense pain due to bone-to-bone contact in my right knee from osteoarthritis, Dr. H recommended that the joint be replaced with a new, shiny artificial knee prosthesis. After installing of the hardware, Dr. H pronounced that my surgery had “gone well.” However, I have never heard any surgeon tell me otherwise after any of my collection of operations.

**February 2013** – Due to intense pain in my replaced right knee, after assessment by medical professionals, they told me it was infected. After considering potential alternatives, Dr. H recommended doing a total knee revision in two steps. First, a complete temporary replacement of the artificial knee joint with upper and lower stems inserted into the leg bones and fixed with antibacterial cement followed later with a permanent knee replacement.

During the step-one surgery, no antibiotics were given in order to obtain accurate fluid and tissue samples for testing. Upon incision, the surgical team encountered a large amount of pus, which they sampled, along with swabbing plastic parts for cultures. Once the bones of the joint were exposed, I received antibiotics. After Dr. H. installed the new joint, the team irrigated the wound with saline, soaked it with antibiotic fluids, drained it, and closed it. However, test results could not identify any specific pathogen for the infection causing the pus.

**May 2013** – I took intravenous antibiotics for several weeks before being cleared for emplacement of the permanent knee joint. The second-step surgery used a procedure very similar to installing of the temporary hardware. Dr. H. gave me antibiotics before the procedure, installed the permanent hardware, and similarly rinsed and soaked the surgical site prior to wound closure.

**May 2014** – About a year later, I again experienced intense pain in my revised right knee. The doctors determined that it was again infected. Since the joint had already been modified in a previous operation, they performed site cleansing surgery. Dr. J opened the surgical site, executed a complete disinfection protocol, and closed the wound. Afterward, the team told me that no bacteria could be identified from the samples taken during surgery.

**April 2021** – Seven years later, due to intense pain in my right knee, I began a protracted consultation with medical personnel involved in previous procedures. Despite no signs of the effects of an infection or evidence of bacteria resident in the knee, the doctors claimed that it was yet again infected. Based on previous history, the medical team recommended repeating the 2014 open-and-flush protocol. Dr. H performed that surgery in June.

**December 2021** – After only six months, due to intense pain in my right knee, I consulted with *a different* surgical practice. Based on previous history, Dr. Carter recommended that the installed revised artificial knee joint be removed and replaced using a two-step process conducted over several months.

In the first step, Dr Carter removed the revised joint and examined the bones near the joint, specifically the patella. There, he found visible indications of a bacterial infection. After an extensive disinfection protocol, Dr. Carter installed a static antibiotic-impregnated spacer, formed by a rod going into the femur and a rod going down the tibia, held together by a glob of surgical cement, which prevented any bending of the knee joint. After the surgery, I was not informed about the nature of the pathogen.

**February 2022** – About six weeks later, Dr. Carter and the team performed the second step of the revision to the artificial right knee joint. The spacer was sawed apart and removed. A thorough disinfection procedure bathed the surgical site with antibiotics followed by placing a new hinged articulating joint.

**October 2023** - The right knee still hurts, not to the extent of infected joints, but rather because of deterioration of function, mobility, and strength of the right knee joint following seven major surgeries. Now, it appears that I shall continue dealing with some level of pain for the rest of my life.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** If you feel your joints are going south and need to be replaced, DO NOT, I say again, DO NOT get a joint replacement until you absolutely, positively CANNOT stand

the pain anymore. (A lesson verbalized by a colleague of Dr. Carter, Dr. Sebastian Peers, who did my shoulder surgeries.)

**LL#2:** The parts that we are born with are God-given and are, by far, the best that God or man has to offer. Stick with your original parts as long as possible before using after-market replacement parts.

**LL #3:** Pain is a relative sensation. I have found that pain tolerance can be a good thing (not reacting immediately to any disturbance in levels of “pain”). However, different people have different levels of tolerance. However, people like me, who have a high pain tolerance, may hurt themselves by not treating the pain when encountered. What that level of pain must be to obtain treatment remains a mystery to me. So, assess your tolerance levels before taking drastic action.

**LL #4:** Get the facts straight; do NOT rely on your memory (especially at our age). This lesson was re-learned while attempting to collate the events noted in this life experience!

**LL#5:** When it comes to severe complications, such as my fall in 2024, treat and solve the root cause of the problem. Do NOT focus significant effort on solving the many symptoms revealed during the identification and initial assessment of the issue at hand.

### **Postscript**

**March 2024:** Originally, I submitted my life experience ending with the above lessons learned. However, five months later, my right knee gave way, and I fell at home. Excruciating pain shot through my right leg and back. At the Emergency Room, blood cultures revealed a sepsis infection in my bloodstream.

The Centers for Disease Control defines sepsis as the body’s extreme response to an infection. It is a life-threatening medical emergency. Sepsis happens when an infection you already have triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. Most cases of sepsis exist before a patient goes to the hospital. Infections that lead to sepsis often start in the lungs, urinary tract, skin, or gastrointestinal tract. Without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death. I was told I had a “30% chance of survival.”

The doctors’ priorities quickly changed from the treatment of pain to the treatment of infection. After several diagnostic tests, the doctors determined that the likely source of infection was either in the back or the offending knee. Since treatment of the back

infection was more easily accomplished with IV antibiotics, the seventh knee became the primary target. Of four equally unpleasant solutions, the doctors suggested it would be best to amputate above the knee. So, on 21 March 2024, the saga of my right knee ended.

Now, I'm in long-term rehabilitation, and I must share another aspect of my knee saga with you.

Without a tireless, patient, understanding, and courageous caregiver, I could not have made it this far. Her name is Elizabeth Ann, or Liz Ann, or Liz, as I call her. She has been by my side since we wed ten days after graduating from the Academy with the Class of 1970. Today, we are a few days shy of sharing our lives together for 54 years! The following few paragraphs reveal the long-term partnership and intertwining of our lives for well over five decades of marriage, along with the most valuable lesson learned.

Liz was my most reliable supporter during my deployment to Vietnam. She was by my side as we enjoyed Europe's sights, sounds, and tastes during our tour in Germany! She bore our first child, Lisa, at the hospital in Bad Cannstadt!

Liz was with me each step of the way as we returned to the good ol' USA and transitioned into the National Guard and the Army Reserves! She helped me succeed while I pursued a civilian career in automotive engineering with Ford Motor Company and General Motors.

Along the way, my beautiful wife graced us with two more kids, Marianne Lynn and Phillip Andrew (Andy, to us). I cherish her because she has been a wonderful mother to our kids and a wonderful wife to me.

Then, in 1984, the happy Frazer family moved to Carmel, Indiana. Liz was steadfast in meeting new friends, creating new memories, and overcoming new challenges, leading to retirement from the Army in 2000 and GM/Allison Engine Company/Rolls Royce North America by 2014. Through it all, Liz helped, supported, and encouraged me.

Toward the end of my employment at Rolls Royce, the saga of the seven knees began. She was my staunchest supporter through knees 1 through 3 and by my side during each hospitalization, surgery, rehab, and outpatient therapy.

During knees 4 and 5, Liz was my cheerleader and counselor. During knees 6 and 7, Liz was my dearest supporter and nearest friend. The recovery steps never changed, nor did Liz's loving support to help me recover.

Then, six days ago, operation 8 approached with the specter of no knee. Liz, our kids, and I cried together as we wrestled with several options.

"Dad, it's up to you. It's your knee!"

"Haven't you been through enough already? Amputate," Liz offered.

A wise doctor listened to our query, “What if it were your Dad, your son, your best friend, in a similar situation? What would you say?” The response was nearly instantaneous: “Cut it off. You have done this seven times before, and it hasn’t worked.”

So, once again, my angel caregiver cried, prayed, and reassured me before I went into the operating room. Once again, she was beside my hospital bed when I woke, reassuring me that I would recover. Once again, she was ready to pay the price to help me rehabilitate.



Don Frazer recovering with and because of his wife Liz Ann

**LL #6:** Here is the **most valuable lesson** I can pass to you. Caregiving is a tough, tiring, and relentless job. It quickly drives a person into the ground while they care for the house, car, kids, shopping, cooking, cleaning, and caring for you. Never, ever take that huge breadth of effort for granted. And if you have a caregiver who is half as good as my Liz, first, thank God. Then, thank your caregiver, as I will do right now.

Liz, I greatly appreciate the tiny and big things you have done for me, operation after operation. You are a prize winner, a stalwart supporter in every department. You have always been caring, loving, forgiving, and loyal. And I must tell you often, honestly,

fervently, and sincerely that I love you, Liz. I love you to the moon and back. Thank you for being here with me through it all.

### **Stroke Survivor**

**Michael (Duck) Johnson B-1 28794**

The stroke I had 37 years ago was the best thing that ever happened to me. It changed me into being a better man.

### **Background**

I graduated 45th in the Class of 1970. Being proficient in speaking Russian and East European studies, I chose to be commissioned as a Military Intelligence officer. After passing Airborne and winter Ranger training, I was sent to Germany.

In 1971, I was an Armor Platoon Leader. By 1972, I was in the V Corps' G2 Operations Division in Augsburg, Germany. There, I became responsible for border operations, generated target folders for long-range reconnaissance, and provided threat briefings to Armor units. Two years later, I provided all USAEUR analysis of the Arab-Israeli October 1973 war, including the battle of order briefings to Department of Intelligence Agency (DIA) personnel.



U.S. Army Military Intelligence Branch Insignia

Subsequently, Corps Commander LTG Desobry recognized my impact on combat readiness as a 1st Lieutenant, and I received my first Army Commendation Medal.

In my spare time, I gained a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from the University of Southern California to improve my skills.

In February 1974, I returned stateside assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps' Special Studies Branch, Military Capabilities Division, Directorate of Intelligence Production for Forces Command's Intelligence Group. By August 1975, as a Captain, I was recognized for "writing a series of all-source intel briefs on Middle Easter Order of Battle which significantly altered national level estimates of potential combatants." Though I received my second Army Commendation Medal and might have been promoted below the zone for major, that wasn't important to me, so I decided to leave the Army in August 1975.



Army Commendation Medal with 1 Oak Leaf  
Cluster (2<sup>nd</sup> award)

I left the Army because I loved the challenge of academic education and knew that military service would get in the way. So, I picked a job with Merrill Lynch in Boston, Massachusetts. My goal was to apply my analytical skills in international relations to easily achieve the required weekly sales quota, leaving me time for academic training to gain higher and higher degrees.

Subsequently, I achieved a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a thesis titled *The Arab-Israeli Military Balance 1984*, followed by postdoctoral studies at Harvard University.

After becoming a civilian, I rapidly moved up in the securities world. In five years, I was the number two guy in the Boston office of fifty brokers. Then, I was hired away from Merrill Lynch. Four years later, at 37 years old, I was Senior Vice President of International Relations at Mosely Securities. Additionally, I wrote articles for the *Boston Globe* and was interviewed by *The Financial Times* in Toronto, Canada. I also had extensive TV and radio exposure.

My home life was also great. In 1981, I started dating Deborah Matthews, a beautiful, talented, and intelligent lady. We moved in together in 1985. I was happy and hitting on all cylinders. A year later, I even passed my annual treadmill and weight-lifting physical with superior results.

Two weeks later, on 19 March 1987, I was driving to work with a friend when I started feeling bad. I pulled over to the side of the road and got out of the car. I slumped to the ground onto my back and told my friend to get an ambulance.

### **Post-Stroke**

I woke up paralyzed from the neck down by a stroke in the motor section of my cortex that controls body movement. The doctor told me, “The type of stroke you had is very rare. Only 1-in-26 million people ever have it.”

That didn’t comfort me. Of course, I asked, what do I have to do to recover?

“Likely, you won’t. You may be paralyzed for life.”

Scared and devastated, I knew in a second what I had done all my life was gone.

At home, I quickly went into the why-me? phase. That produced nothing of value.

Next, because my brain was not damaged, I decided I could still work by analyzing and selling financial advice, even if that work would take me much longer than usual. For several years, I tried that course of action. But I learned I was unemployable.

### **Revelation**

But one person wanted me. In 1991, Deborah married me. Even though she knew the life we had was gone, she stuck with me. Even though she knew how hard it would be to do forever home care, she stuck with me. Even though I would be confined to a bed and wheelchair, she stuck with me. Even though she knew things would gradually get tougher and I could never hug her again, she stuck with me.

That’s when I knew God had sent me an angel. If she had left me, I would have likely given up and chosen to die. Luckily, there is a comfort I have about our relationship. My Deborah has earned her spot in heaven.

### **A Better Course**

In time, I accepted that I had focused on the wrong things during my pre-stroke years. I had focused too much on personal achievement and satisfaction. I had focused on earthly life and not eternal life.

Then, I realized that God had helped me by slapping me on the head so that I could focus on my eternal life. I realized I had received a thankful slap and been given the time to focus on God and not on me.



### **Lessons Learned**

- ✓ Having had a severe stroke or another type of debilitating injury, you will have fear, remorse, why-me feelings, and concern for your family carrying on. I urge you not to wallow in despair. Instead, work hard to decide how you will live your future years. Work hard to understand and recognize your new emotions and physical conditions. Take a positive course to the future.
  
- ✓ Expect that your emotions may be significantly different than before the stroke. In my case, I was surprised that I had extreme emotional responses. If someone told me a joke, I would laugh, and laugh, and laugh—almost uncontrollably. Once I recognized this change in me, I adapted by deliberately “flatlining” my emotions.
  
- ✓ Expect to gradually become isolated from interacting with other people, old friends, and family members.
  
- ✓ Be a good patient, treat your caregiver kindly, and often thank her or him. Don’t dump your frustration and anger on your caregiver.
  
- ✓ It is never too late to turn to God. Repent your sins and accept God’s love while carrying the cross given to you to carry. While doing that, treat others with grace.

**Note:** The above was transcribed by the senior editor since Duck was unable to type.

## **Category: Dealing With Passing**

**Happy Heaven Day**

**Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207**

On our 31<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary, my wife died in my arms. During the weeks after her passing, I gained three insights that led me to write the Happy Heaven Day card below.

**The first insight** is that our society celebrates all types of milestones in people's lives with cheerful, positive cards to encourage the recipient to enjoy life. Cards for a happy birthday, Valentine's day, happy anniversary, congratulations on graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade/junior high/high school, cheers for getting married, getting a new job, and even getting a divorce.

**The second insight** is that our society repeatedly portrays the death of loved ones as a wholly negative event. It overemphasizes the loss to those living, including only giving condolence cards. Over time, I came to conclude that approach is very one-sided toward the living and, in some ways, disrespectful to the person who died.

**The third insight** was that I was clueless about the pain and emotions before I experienced the black grief of someone I dearly loved departing this life. Plus, I was not trained or pre-armed by family or society to handle the grief in a healing manner. And if you haven't yet experienced such a loss, you too, are clueless.

Some of you may see my card as an acceptance. Some may see it as a love letter. Some may totally disagree. But I hope that sharing this approach may help those who know the pain I talk of. Maybe it will help them heal by saying a Happy Heaven Day prayer or writing and reading a Happy Heaven Day card to their loved one, whether it is a daughter or son, mom or dad, aunt or uncle, cousin, grandparent, or dear friend. If you think it might help, then please share this healing approach with them.

So here is the Happy Heaven Day card I gave to Joanna Lakey Mitchell.



My Love,

I have accepted important changes in my life since I held you in my arms on our wedding anniversary, telling you, “I love you.” And then feeling your life force flash through my body before the medical monitors began beeping.

First, I am happy that you reached heaven, a goal you worked to achieve all your life. I know this because of the sign you sent me after I asked the Holy Mother to help you. Thank you for showing me you made it and that you’re okay on the other side of the veil.

I’ve also accepted that if God granted me the power to bring you back — I would not!

During our years together, I worked to keep you warm and well and wanted the best for you. So, bringing you back would be the opposite of my concern for you all the years that you struggled with pain and heart surgeries. It would not be an act of love. It would be selfish. Instead, I cherish the thought of you in the light, with the God of kindness, and happy among those you love who passed before you. Knowing you are safe and finally well.

So, instead of mourning the day you left me, I celebrate the day you arrived in heaven. I wish you a Happy Heaven Day!

Yes, grief still ambushes me. A song, a piece of clothing, a souvenir, a holiday decoration, or passing a place we visited together. Each often triggers a memory of how much you meant to me and how much I miss you. Then, sadness hammers my body and, tears flow from my soul. Other times, I feel adrift and reluctant to make changes. But I have learned to reduce the crushing pain and hesitation. I focus on you being in heaven, then recall one or several of the moments that created the incredible life I feel so lucky to have had with you. The many photos you took of our journey together also bring me cherished memories. Thank you.

But what if I am not accepted into the light and never see you again — that would be Hell. So, each day, I continue to try to do the right thing, to make others laugh, to bring a bit of comfort into their life, or offer advice with compassion when they are challenged, sad, or in pain. I try to be like you always were.

So, my beloved, until my judgment day and forever ... no matter what ... I love you.

## **Raising Daughters**

**David Varnell F-3 29326**

In 1980, I was returning home from a weeklong business meeting only to learn that my wife, the mother of our two young daughters, was in intensive care. She died less than 24 hours later.

What would I do now as a single dad with my four-year-old and one-year-old daughters? I never expected that my wife would die before me and leave me with two young daughters to raise. Daughters should be raised by their mothers, not their fathers. My wife had more of a nurturing instinct than I did.



Christmas 1980 – Dave, Carrisa, and Anne-Marie Varnell

For the next three months, I struggled with how to move forward with my career while raising two young girls. I had to decide whether to remain with the company and move to Rhode Island, which would reduce the amount of time I would be away from home. Or should I remain in Oklahoma, 12 hours away from my family and 14 hours away from my wife's family in Minnesota? Moving to Rhode Island would put us even farther away from our families.

I decided to take a new position with the company that would put me closer to my family but still require some time away from home. I hired a part-time live-in caretaker who would be with us from Monday to Friday to cook and care for my daughters. This arrangement reduced my time away from home compared to my time in Oklahoma.

Also, I got help from my family during the summer when I would send the girls to live with them for a month. Plus, I ensured they spent time in Minnesota with my wife's parents.

**Lessons Learned #1:** Life does not go as planned. Like adjusting from civilian life to West Point, you learn to either adapt to the circumstances or fail. Ranger training helped me deal with raising my daughters. In Florida's wet and cold swamps, we learned our physical and mental limitations. But more importantly, we learned not to give up or feel sorry for ourselves.

It is challenging enough when you only think of yourself, but when you are responsible for those you lead (or raise), you learn to focus on them more than yourself. Of course, I was sad and mad to lose my wife, but I knew I had to make a living and raise my daughters. My daughters became my primary goal, and everything else was secondary. Focusing on their upbringing had its ups and downs, but we survived. My career goals may not have been reached, but I succeeded in raising my daughters.

I got to experience activities like shopping for the girls' first training bras without embarrassing them. I shopped for prom dresses, became a "cheerleader mom," and attended sorority mom meetings to learn how to get my daughter into a college sorority. These moments I would never have experienced if my wife had been alive. I may not have been a big-time CEO, but I spent 18-plus years learning to be a successful father and mother.

**Lessons Learned #2:** Most importantly, I relearned the lesson so well-embedded at the Academy in the first word of the West Point motto—Duty. The grit we call character that we dig deep inside ourselves to find and then use to overcome life's challenges.

### **From Russia With Love**

#### **Michael and Deborah Snow B-3 29217**

My first wife, Susan, died in an auto accident in 1989, leaving me with two daughters, Shelly (17) and Amanda (9). Fortunately, two years later, I met a wonderful woman, Debbie, whom I married. She had no children, so we decided we would adopt

Debbie had a sister in Martinsburg, West Virginia, whose husband was the financial officer at the local hospital. He alerted us to the birth of a baby girl on February 4, 1995,

who needed adoptive parents. With his help, we began the process. Soon, we became the proud parents of **Kathryn Jean**.

When Katie was three years old, we decided to adopt a little boy as her brother. Since this was our second adoption, we expected it would be easier than the first since we had already assembled all the necessary signed and notarized documents and navigated all the legal requirements.

- Debbie's and my marriage certificate in New Jersey (NJ)
- Debbie's divorce decree from her first marriage in Pennsylvania but divorce in New Jersey
- Birth Certificates, mine from Ohio and Debbie's from Pennsylvania
- Katie's birth certificate from West Virginia
- A letter verifying that I was stationed and worked in the Pentagon in Washington D.C., plus security clearance documentation.
- Documents from New Jersey verifying that Debbie was working there.
- The Death Certificate for my first wife
- Proof of ownership of our house in NJ plus pictures
- Three years of complete financial statements to include tax returns.
- Three reference letters, for each of us, recommending that we were good people as parents.

### **Adoption From Russia**

With the help of a Maryland attorney who had previously worked with the Jewish Family Services (JFS) in Philadelphia, we assembled and sent the documentation packet for review and approval. JFS works with couples for adoption without regard to religious faith.

The JFS recommended we adopt a child out of Russia because it was usually easy to do. To help us decide, they supplied a 5-minute video illegally smuggled out of Russia because Premier Putin was discouraging adoptions of Russian children by U.S. citizens.

We selected Alexei Ivanovich Bernikov, born August 15, 1996, after seeing him in a video of children in an orphanage in Barnaul, Russia. It is a city of 800,000 located in southern Siberia, about 600 miles north of where the borders of Kazakstan, China, and Mongolia come together.

Since Alexei was in Russia and already born, we were unable to meet him prior to adopting him. Plus, we could communicate with Russian authorities only through the Jewish Family Services.

However, we decided to proceed with applying to the Russian adoption services through the JFS. We resubmitted all the same documents with a new twist — each had to be *apostilled*.

In each State, an official is appointed who verifies the qualifications of each notary public and grants them a license or document that authorizes the notary to perform his or her duties. This process and seal is an apostille. In addition to postage, it cost \$75 to have each document apostilled. More costly was the time spent gathering all the apostilled documents. It took roughly three months and many, many phone calls. That was apostille Step-1.

Apostille Step-2 required that the State validate all documents apostilled by New Jersey citizens in an office in Trenton. Unexpectedly, almost unbelievably, New Jersey LOST the packet of documents! Our hope of a quick and uncomplicated adoption began to fade.

Fortunately, Deb had saved copies of absolutely every original document. However, the entire process of getting all the documents apostilled had to be repeated, as they required original signatures only. This do-over added another three months and duplicate costs to the adoption process. We wisely hand-carried the replacement set of documents to Trenton, NJ, and went back in person to pick them up.

Apostille Step-3 ended in mid-1999 when we delivered the entire packet to the JFS, which sent our adoption packet to their contacts in Russia.

Then, we waited to hear from the Russians. From mid-1999 until June 2000, we waited nearly a year to receive an email summoning us to meet Alexei within three weeks. We thought this would be our “date” to fly over to meet our new son and then return with him. Unfortunately, no! The purpose of the late July meeting was for us to meet Alexei and for the Russians to assess us as parents.

It also came when I could not possibly take leave from the Army. Debbie made all the arrangements to travel with our 19-year-old daughter, Amanda, so Deb would not have to travel alone.

### **Visit To Barnaul July 2000**

Debbie and Amanda made the trip to the orphanage in Barnaul at a tough time for our family. Debbie’s mother passed on July 4, 2000. Shortly afterward, Deb and Amanda departed JFK International Airport in New York for their 12-hour flight to Moscow.

Upon arriving in Russia, Deb and Amanda were met by the Russian contact for JFS. He had arranged for a translator to be available to help because neither woman spoke Russian. When they checked in at their Moscow hotel, they discovered their reservations

had gotten mixed up, and the two had a room with only one bed. Since there were no other hotel rooms they could shift into, it was not a great way to begin the trip.

They flew on to Barnaul the next day, a three-hour flight. They were greeted by a young Russian lady, Vera Dymova, plus a translator, who accompanied them everywhere. Being Summer, the children in the orphanage were in a nearby mountain area where the air quality was much better. The reason for moving the children to the mountains from a crowded orphanage in Barnaul was the risk of tuberculosis.

Deb and Amanda had nicer hotel accommodations in this new location in Barnaul, which were much more comfortable and well-appointed. There, they could visit with four-year-old Alexei and speak with his caregivers. The purpose of the visit was for the Communists to evaluate Debbie and for Debbie to get to know Alexei. Deb also met with a female Communist education official and our Russian attorney.

The woman discouraged our adoption by her intimidating demeanor. Apparently, misinformation circulated in Russia that U.S. adoptive parents were taking children to America for organ harvesting. Deb was frightened and concerned that this official would derail the adoption after all our efforts and expense. After an exchange of information and instructions, Debbie and Amanda flew back to America.

From our perspective, little was accomplished during this trip other than getting acquainted with Alexei. Winning the approval of the Communists was still uncertain.

### **Return To Moscow**

Again, we waited to hear from the Russians while continuing to prepare. While Deb arranged for our return to Barnaul, I was busy standing up a newly activated Army Reserve Chemical Brigade Headquarters as the S-3 Operations Officer. Only two of us were in Operations: me and Master Sergeant Jon Dillin, my Operations NCO. I expected that I would be away in Russia for just one week.

Since we had a 4½-year-old daughter, four dogs, and four cats at home, along with a teenage daughter in private school, firm and complete logistic arrangements with a pet sitter and babysitter were essential. However, the date remained unknown yet imminent. Helpfully, MSG Dillin carried the load for me at Ft. Dix, New Jersey, so I could make the trip.

We finally got the invitation email dated 12 September 2000 (better translated as an ORDER) to return to the Barnaul orphanage to receive Alexei. Deb and I were ready.

We left the States on September 27 and arrived in Barnaul on September 29. Thankfully, Deb had obtained first-class round-trip plane tickets. We traveled with five



pieces of luggage stuffed with clothing for the trip, an entire bag of snacks and goodies for the children, and gifts for the caregivers at the orphanage.

This was my first visit to Russia. As we rode in from the Moscow airport to our hotel, I was amazed at how many of the advertising signs in the Cyrillic alphabet were cognates. These are words in Russian that, when pronounced, sound just like an English word. My Russian from West Point, along with the cognates, really helped us.

We met our translator at the hotel. This time, our reservations were what we had requested, and we had a pleasant room. The next day in Barnaul, we were met by our driver, the father of the young lady who would translate for us, Vera Dymova. We were taken to a Dacha with very spacious accommodations formerly used by the Communist Party elite. There, the staff prepared meals for us and served us at the dining table in our room. The next day, our driver, Vladimir, arrived with his daughter, Vera. He delivered us to the orphanage.

It was late-September and cool enough that there had been a freeze. We were shown into the garden (now with wilting plants) and were told that it was used in warmer weather to grow some food for the children.

As we toured outside around the back there was a fenced playground for the children, equipped with tricycles, playground equipment, and a playhouse. The children were outside playing, dressed warmly in cool-weather clothing. At this point we were escorted to the office of the administrator where we waited for Alexei to arrive. The only heat in the room came from a device that looked like a board but was a resistance heater plugged into a wall outlet.

After a short wait, Alexei arrived. He was a handsome little boy. The administrator offered him Chai tea with a cookie. The treat caused Alexei to relax while we spoke with him through Vera and the administrator. We learned that Alexei had just turned four years old on 15 August.

Later, we were taken to see the room he lived in with seven other little boys about the same age. There were eight single beds lined up side by side. The room reminded me of the bedroom of the seven dwarfs in Snow White. Everything was very neat, indicating a high state of order, discipline, and routine. On the wall, there were hooks with coats, hats, and gloves, with boots underneath them.

Then, we learned that the children had no clothing of their own. Getting dressed was first come, first served for coats and boots. During that visit, we brought a sweater outfit, which Alexei donned. But before we left, we insisted that we take the outfit back since other children would take it from him. I remember Alexei being very upset about giving it back to us.

During this visit, we were informed that this was the beginning of our week to “get to know” Alexei. This was the first time we were informed that we would not be taking custody of Alexei as quickly as we expected to return with him to the U.S. We also visited with the same Communist Party official, who again discouraged us from this adoption. We have always referred to her as the “Nightmare Lady.”

Given that we had to wait to take custody, we decided for Deb to fly home early since Amanda and our youngest daughter had been left with a babysitter.

I was very glad I had contacted the LTC in the Army Attache’s Office at the U.S. Embassy back in Moscow to inform him that we were in Russia and the purpose of our visit. I felt that if we disappeared, someone would be looking for us. I have understated the level of fear we felt while in Russia.

I remained in Barnaul to finish the adoption proceedings. There were numerous documents to be prepared and signed, including adoption papers, a new birth certificate for Alexei (now named Alexander James Snow), plus a name change document as well as other documents. At the end of one day, during which we had gone back and forth across Barnaul at least twice, I asked the translator why these offices were not consolidated at one location. He agreed but said it was local politics. So, I told him that in the U.S., when we had politicians who promoted such inefficiency, we voted them out of office.

One day during this period, we also stopped at the Mileetsia (police station). I noticed that none of the police officers smiled. I asked my translator why everyone appeared grumpy. He asked me if I had hot water and a shower that morning. I told him yes. He asked me how I would feel working day after day without hot water or a shower. Point taken. They would be smiling like me if they were staying at a Daca, where Communist officials had the best.

Another day, I along with my female Russian attorney, appeared in a Russian Court in Barnaul presided over by a female judge to answer questions concerning Alexei’s future home life, if we were aware that he was impaired, etc.,

Finally, after another week in Barnaul, I was allowed to depart with Alex and fly back to Moscow. He and I stayed another four nights waiting for an appointment to finalize documents enabling us to fly back to the U.S.

A year after we brought Alex home, Putin stopped adoptions to the U.S.

### **Insights About Russia**

Though we only experienced one orphanage, we found the caretakers, all females, to be most caring and loving. They and the Russian people knew the fate of children who were not adopted. At 16 years old, they were turned out of the orphanage. Young males would be conscripted into the military services. Young females were taken as domestic

servants. So, the Russian people were very open to seeing orphans get into good homes. But adoptions to foreigners were only allowed if the child had some disability. For example, Alex had been examined by a Russian doctor who diagnosed him as having a disorder (One that we have never detected). Deb and I believe that the Russians in the orphanages, lawyers, court officials, and possibly the Nightmare Lady all knew that Alex's diagnosis was false but recognized he would have a far better shot at a good life by being adopted.

We persevered to adopt Alex from the time he was two-years old. The total expense was around \$75,000. He was worth every penny.

### **Back In The USA**

I wrote out a long list of Russian words for my wife to use when talking with Alex while I was at work. Within a month, he could no longer remember the names of other children at the orphanage when shown a picture of them. Within six months, he was using English words. We held him back from starting school for one year to ensure he had no communication or learning issues when he started schooling.

Deborah and I started this life experience to let Kathryn Jean grow up happily with a sibling. Alex and Katie became very close with sports, academics, church, and social experiences

Now, Alex is 28. He finished an enlistment in the Navy, is married, and living in Washington State. He chose to live there because his assignment in the Navy was on the USS John Stennis, an aircraft carrier based there.

### **Lessons Learned for anyone thinking of adopting a child:**

**LL #1:** During our adoption life experience, we got a taste of Communism, the enormous size of Russia, the kindness of the Russian people, and surprisingly learned why and how much we loved our homeland.

**LL #2:** We broke bread with our driver, Vladimir, and his family. We learned that they are just hard-working people just like most U.S. citizens, trying to make a decent living. For example, Vladimir's wife is a Dr. and worked in the original orphanage caring for Alexei. Her monthly salary was the 3equivalent of \$300 per month.

**LL #3:** For any endeavor requiring the level of documentation as this one, we learned that hand carrying or at least return receipt, is essential. Our failure to do this added at least three months to the adoption. Do not trust the U.S. mail service.

### **Loyal to The End**

#### **Colleen & Patrick Dunphy H-2 29447**

Pat and I were high school friends in Minnesota. He was always energetic and a happy soul. After graduation, each of us went on to college. I was accepted into a Catholic nursing school and hoped Pat would accept the scholarship he had to the University of Minnesota. Instead, he accepted his appointment to West Point. Interestingly, both institutions restricted students from marrying while they were students.

He returned home several times, and I visited him twice at the Academy. There, he was noted for his humor and always having a positive outlook. Visiting was fun, and I enjoyed being with the other couples in “Happy” H-2. I came to hope that Pat and I would be married.

Unlike many Academy couples who fell in love and married shortly after graduation, we had to wait until I graduated in December. So, during Pat’s winter Ranger School break, we took our wedding vows.

By September 1971, he was in Vietnam, serving as a platoon leader in the 196<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade within the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. From his letters and what his Army associates said about him, Pat demonstrated genuine concern for the welfare of the soldiers he worked with.

He came back to me, not wounded physically. But, like many soldiers, he had to mentally recover from combat. In 1975, we decided to adopt our first child, and Pat decided to resign his commission so we could adopt a second one and raise our kids together. Subsequently, we wound up living and working in Clearwater, Florida, raising three children.

As I recall, it was around 1980 when the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall came to Clearwater. Pat wanted to see it

I watched him diligently search for the names of soldiers from his platoon who had died in-country. When he could not find one soldier’s name, he was immensely bothered. It was not right that one of his men was missing from the national tribute to the U.S. military for serving and dying in Southeast Asia.

When we returned home, his concern and respect for his men again kicked in. He immediately began searching through his records, photographs, and memorabilia from his time in Vietnam. After several days, he found proof of service with the soldier who had died in Vietnam.



Photograph by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

But Pat was not finished. He traveled to Washington D.C and shared the proof about his platoon-mate in the Pentagon and with the managers of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. His effort resulted in the soldier's name being added to the Vietnam War Memorial.

**Lesson Learned:** Welfare and caring for soldiers who served their country goes beyond the battlefield. A good leader knows that and acts upon that rule.

### **Ten Years Later**

On August 21<sup>st</sup> 1990, while Pat was attending a minor league baseball game he, collapsed. He never regained consciousness. Suddenly, at age 40, I became a widow during the birthday week of our five-year-old child.

Now, alone with three children, I had to move on without my Pat. That struggle was made more difficult because I could not receive life insurance until the coroner's autopsy was completed. The delay lasted ten months.

I was surprised at the delay and surprised when I read the death certificate. It stated there was no damage into or out of the heart. The search for an anatomic cause for his death had caused the delay. Of little help, included with the death certificate was a pamphlet describing sudden adult death syndrome.

Meanwhile, my peers and the couples we knew were caring and helpful. But having no similar experience of losing a cherished loved one, they did not understand the long, slow recovery that I and others like me faced. I attended grief counseling. Two times, I dropped out. The third time, I attended all of the sessions. Still, memories and thoughts of Pat are with me every day. One solace is how well our children turned out.

**Lesson Learned:** Daily cherish and appreciate those you love, for they can be damaged or pass away at any moment.

### **Army Family Caring** **Wife Kris Harper D-3 w29104**

While we were assigned to Fort Lewis, I had a small, part-time job at Army Community Services, where I heard the devastating news of a murder-suicide off-post involving the ex-wife and children of a Ft. Lewis soldier. The boyfriend killed the mother and oldest daughter before turning the gun on himself, all witnessed by the younger daughter, who was hiding behind the sofa. I learned that Pierce County Child Protective Services was taking the little girl to the stepmother on post. I did not know the woman personally, but I recognized the name; she was one of ours. My husband, of course, was deployed.

I left work early and visited Linda Matz, the deputy commanding general's wife. I told Linda that if my husband were home, we would check on the stepmother and the child together, but I didn't think I could do it alone. She reassured me, "Of course, you can, and I'll go with you."

When we arrived at the soldier's home, we were met by a very frazzled young woman; her husband was deployed, and she had two small children of her own. Now, she had a traumatized seven-year-old, as well. We visited for about one hour, Linda sitting silently beside me while I did all the talking. We ensured this young woman had all the contact numbers she might need and assured her that her husband would be home as soon as the deployed unit could make the arrangements.

Not long after this, two soldiers, one carrying his two-year-old on his shoulders, were hit and killed by a train while returning from a local fishing hole. The battalion

commander's wife came to me and said, "Kris, I can't do this!" I responded, "Yes, you can, and I'll help you." In reality, however, I did very little. I sat by while the battalion spouse network sprang into action - planning meals, transportation, and accommodations for those who needed them.

The memorial service was one of the saddest I have ever attended. The young widow was sedated; the battalion soldiers were in shock. Afterward, as the girl was helped into the car, the father approached my husband and me. His demeanor was hard to read, and we had no idea what he might say or do. He turned to my husband and, in a voice that could be interpreted as aggressive, asked, "Sir, are you the commander here?" to which my husband responded, "Yes, Sir, I'm one of them." I did not know what to expect. The man threw his arms around my husband's neck and said, "I just want to thank you for taking care of my family." The two of them stood hugging and crying for several minutes.

**Lesson Learned #1:** When most young families need help, they can reach out to a family member or someone they grew up with. The Army removes its members from that support group, especially when assigned overseas. Mom and Sis aren't readily available, but a cohesive unit can provide that support. The combined group of men, women, and spouses will be there for you until your family of origin arrives or until you no longer need them.

**Lesson Learned #2:** The second lesson is less obvious but more important. Active duty service members receive leadership training throughout their careers. Spouses learn from other spouses, primarily the spouses of senior officers and non-commissioned officers who have gone before us. Trust that they will share their experience and support.

## **Humor and Love**

**Michael (Mike) McCabe G4 29287**

Some lessons are common sense, such as "This too shall pass," "Good things come to those who wait," or "Live for the future, not in the past." You know, the things your mother said that somehow survived growing older and forgetting more often. That said, perhaps my set of experiences from 1999 to 2021 are worthy of mention, and perhaps the lessons I learned and the frivolity I use in telling them will provide a bit of comic relief in this oh-too-serious world.

I retired from the Foreign Service in late 1999. The following spring, my wife and I moved from northern Virginia to rural Maine. We lived in a log cabin, and she managed a tourist gift store while I assisted. She also managed a beach cottage she owned but rented out in the summer. Time passed, stuff happened, and we began raising four grandkids, grades 1 through 6. After the older two graduated high school, we returned to Virginia in 2016 with the younger two. I still have all three properties: the beachfront cottage, the log cabin, and the gift store.

For a few weeks that summer, the youngest of the four grandkids and I spent time in Maine working at the gift store. It had been for sale since 2015, and I thought someone would purchase it that summer, but the deal fell through. Even though we spent seven weeks in Maine, no one should be jealous about our “spending the summer in Maine.” Taking care of the store, supervising the beachfront cottage, ensuring the four young adults in the log cabin kept the place in good shape, and deciding what to take back to Virginia didn’t leave much free time.

While there, I had to take the batteries out of the store’s carbon monoxide detector because the loud beeping was making me dizzy and giving me a headache. One time, I went into the town of Machias, a short half-hour drive from the store, to donate blood. I will never do that again. There were way too many stupid questions: Whose blood is it? Where did you get it from? Why is it in a bucket?

My wife and I stayed at our log cabin with my oldest grandson, his best friend, and their girlfriends. Near the end of our time up north, I recognized that Jesus was also staying with us. How did I know? Once I heard one of the girlfriends say loudly, “Jesus Christ! It’s eight in the morning. Aren’t you up yet?”

It must have been Jesus because my grandson's girlfriend later took her boyfriend and me to McDonald’s in Machias, near the city hospital where she worked. While driving, she sipped from an unlabeled bottle. Unfortunately, because she was speeding, a policeman stopped the car. In the discussion, he asked her what she was drinking. “Just water, officer.”

The policeman sniffed and then tasted the liquid. “Ma’am, that’s not water, it’s wine.” “OMG!” she said. “Jesus did it again!”

The last night the two of us were in Maine, my oldest grandson, and his best friend took us into Machias to the Thirsty Moose Café, a local bar across the street from a bank. After we were there for a while, the bartender yelled out, “Does anyone here know CPR?” I paused, then yelled back, “I know the entire alphabet!” Everyone laughed and laughed—well, except for this one guy.



A few days after returning from Maine, it was time for the teachers to return to school to prepare for the kids. Subsequently, during the summer of 2021, the Title-1 high school where I taught had a leadership change. Our new principal, Dr. Jefferson, was black. Our new Director of Counseling, Ms. Brown, was black. We got two new Assistant Principals, Ms. A. Brown, who was black, and Ms. T. Brown, who also was black. Our Social Science Department hired a new teacher, Ms. H. Brown, who was white. On the very light side, I learned that school staff come in all colors.

**Lessons Learned #1:** Perhaps the wisdom of the great Yankee catcher Yogi Berra is applicable here: When you come to a fork in the road, take it. That is, if an adventure is in the offing, even if it's a bit outside your comfort zone, take it and enjoy the experience. And never take yourself too seriously.

**Lessons Learned #2:** Humor often softens the difficulties of life and living together. I offer this advice because my wife passed away in the late summer of 2020, during the China Covid pandemic, but not from Covid. We were married for 50 years, three months, and change. And I cherish the frivolous and fun memories we created together decade after decade.

## **Two Regrets**

**John M. Holm C-4 29323**

After 75 years on this good planet, here are two examples of when corners are cut, things can go south on you. Or, possibly, you've waited too long to recognize how vital some things truly are.

### **Example #1: That Won't Happen to Me**

As a younger man, I'd look at older folks with mobility issues, and my reaction was always, that won't happen to me. I was young, healthy, active, and reasonably fit. I walked a lot, regularly rode bicycles long distances, went to the gym, and enjoyed life. I felt great.

What I did not do was stretch or do any resistance training, like lifting weights, even light weights. When I retired from my civilian career, I went to the gym but limited my workouts to the stationary bike and swimming laps. Both seemed to me to be good exercise.

Then, two things happened: first, I got atrial fibrillation. That kicked my butt. I had a hard time just walking around the block. Next, it was the COVID-19 pandemic, which

effectively shut down everything. So, I stayed at home and pretty much vegetated physically.

What resulted was that I let myself get out of shape. Furthermore, it caused the tendons in my hips and legs to tighten and shorten, to the point where walking or simply moving became very uncomfortable. I now rely a lot on a cane when walking even short distances.

**Lesson Learned:** I can confidently say that a more thoughtful and regular exercise routine, including stretching, would have been the smart thing for me to have started and maintained through the years. In retrospect, it would not have involved a lot of time, but it sure would have enhanced my life today.

### **Example #2: Time Doesn't Wait for You**

This is a tough lesson to share, and I can't do much about it now. I recently lost my wife of 45 years. The cause of death was due to a cerebral arterial-venous malformation with associated brain aneurysms, one of which ruptured during surgery to fix the problem. This condition had probably been lurking in her head during the majority of her life and wasn't revealed until she had a seizure last summer.

We all deal with loss and grief differently. It is not my intent to tell or suggest to you how you should or shouldn't handle grief situations.

But I have plenty of regrets regarding things I didn't say or do, and I can't go back and fix them. I wish I told her I loved her a whole lot more than I did. I wish I'd thanked her more for all the things she did for me. I wish I'd complimented her more on how attractive I found her, how smart I thought she was, or for her excellent suggestions. I wish I'd held her hand more. But I can't now; it's too late. Time passed, and I never got around to it. And now I feel bad about that.

**Lesson Learned:** Don't make the same mistake I did – waiting until the time has passed. Instead, do this. Imagine if your loved one passed. Then ask yourself, *Is there anything I would regret not telling her?* If there is, now, go to your spouse and tell her.

### **Make The Call; Do The Visit**

**William (Bill) McBeth I-3 28758**

I first met Dorothy Conner in the summer of 1957. I was nine years old and it was the first year that I went with my father and Uncle Jack to the hay field to drive a tractor

mowing hay. It was a big deal for me! They had a contract to harvest hay for a large Sandhills, Nebraska cattle ranch. That meant being away from home in July and August, doing real work, living in a homemade “Bunk Car”, eating three huge home cooked meals a day, taking a shower twice a week in the bunk house whether I needed it or not, and living ranch life large!

Dorothy was married to the straw boss of the ranch Martin Conner. She was also one of the cooks, and mother of two boys Jim and Dan. Dan was my age and a great friend. When I turned 14, I had a full-time summer job on the ranch as a real cowboy riding horses, wrestling calves, and roping at branding time, fixing fence, and miking the cow morning and night. Living even larger! During my years at the ranch, Dorothy’s husband, became a real mentor to me and a great friend.

After high school, I left for four years at West Point. But I was so attached to ranch life that I returned post-graduation and spent all of my leave, about 60 days, working there. After six years active duty and then five years getting through Veterinary School at Kansas State University. I returned to my hometown, Gordon, Nebraska in 1981 to practice veterinary medicine.

By that time, Martin and Dorothy had moved to town, where Martin was working at a feedlot. Instantly, Martin and my relationship as great friends, and Martin as a mentor, picked up where it left off.

After about two years, the practice didn’t work out, and my wife Anne and I moved to Wray, Colorado where I started a mixed practice and where I live today. Over the years, I visited Martin and Dorothy off and on and attended Martin’s funeral in 2002. Unfortunately, Dorothy fell off my radar.

In 2021 I visited Gordon township for a family reunion with lots of relatives. Since my parents had passed away, and lodging was in short supply , my sister Ellen mentioned an old family friend, Sheila Moore who had a basement apartment who said she would let my wife Anne and me use it. We jumped at the opportunity.

Shiela, 92 at the time, was originally from Canada and had met her husband Bruce who was in the Army Air Corps in WW II, working on the ALCAN Highway. Later they married and moved to Gordon. As an aside, their son Lynn was a high school classmate and great friend who subsequently attended the Air Force Academy.

Anne and I spent the night in the basement without seeing Shiela as she had gone to bed. The next morning after a run, Shiela was up pattering around and asked if I wanted a bit of breakfast and coffee. Anne was still asleep, so I thought what the hell, might as well visit! What a marvelous experience. Two hours of great listening. As we wound down,

and I was thinking about getting on the road to make the long drive home Shiela said “You should stop by and say hello to my good friend and neighbor Dorothy! She’s 98.”

I realized that I had forgot that Martin and Dorothy lived across the street. Initially I thought, *I need to get rolling and maybe next time*. But then, I reconsidered and went over to Dorothy’s house.

She was up and about, spry as ever with her infectious laugh – it had always sounded like an old hen cackling – and we visited for an hour and a half about Martin, her sons, the ranch, and my parents. So neat, so rewarding. I gave her a hug and promised that I would stop by next time I was in Gordon.

A week later, my sister called and said Dorothy had passed away in her sleep!

**Lesson Learned:**

What a lesson for me! I am sure it’s a function of my age and circumstances, but so many times since that day, when someone pops into my head – a classmate, a friend, a relative, young or old, I give them a call or go see them. And so often they need to hear from someone who cares about them. I encourage you to stay in contact with old friends and family. And, when someone pops into your head, make the call; do the visit.

## Chapter 8 — Our Connections to Faith



West Pointers and their wives pass through the Academy and life with differing degrees of religious belief. The lessons in this chapter reveal some of those degrees of faith and how the author came to them.

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### Category: Life Changing Events

#### **Impossible Proof, A Testimonial**

**Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207**

One winter afternoon at our house, my wife Jo Anna asked me to take her to the hospital. It was the first time during years of marriage that she ever made such a request, despite previous major operations, including three open heart surgeries.



Jo Anna Lakey Mitchell

I carried her to my pickup truck and raced to the hospital. There, I carried her into the emergency room. Thirty minutes later, the doctor told us her kidneys were failing, and she only had hours to live. This time, my Jo Anna would not come home from the hospital.

After we said a prayer together, I went to work. First, because my wife was a believer in God, I got a priest to come to the hospital and hear Jo Anna's confession and provide her final communion. Meanwhile, I alerted friends and family of the situation. When they arrived or called in from far away, I allowed each person five minutes alone with her to talk to each other privately and honestly.

As she weakened, her eyes closed. I encouraged her to hold on because her son and daughter were racing toward the hospital. Others spoke with her, but she responded less. When the son arrived, I told her to open her eyes to see him. And she did!

But I knew time was running out. Now it was my five minutes. Despite the monitor wires and intravenous tubes, I held her in my arms. I thanked her for all the anniversaries that we had enjoyed and that my love for her would last forever.

Abruptly, a physical pressure pushed into my chest, surprising me as it gradually moved through my chest bones, heart, and then out my back. When the invisible shaft of pressure left my body, the heartbeat and breathing monitors started squawking. At that moment, I realized Jo Anna's soul had said goodbye to me before she died in my arms on our 31<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary.

After leaving the hospital, it was dark and dismal when I drove down the gravel road to our small ranch. It worsened when I stood in the fireplace room, knowing that I would never again warm Jo Anna to ward off the chill caused by her blocked arteries and weak heart.

During twenty-three years, I had built 150 or more fires per year in that room to keep her comfortable, where she often slept in her recliner chair. That's over 3,400 fires. But now, I had to face making the first fire just for me and not for her.

To feel closer to my wife, as the fire started warming the room, I covered up in her chair while the black grief continued gnawing at me. Eventually, I escaped the pain and tears by falling asleep.



Hours later, I woke in the dark feeling the grief again. But the pain could not erase my need to help my wife as I had done since marrying her, despite knowing her significant health issues. But after your spouse dies, you do not have many options.

Before starting to pray for Jo Anna, it came to me that the Holy Mother must have felt the same terrible anguish while watching her son suffer on the cross and then die. I knew Mother Mary would understand my grief and my pleas to help my wife into heaven.

After those prayers, I tried to figure out what more I could do or what offering of merit I could make. I decided, as an author, I could write several books to help spread God's message. So, I promised God that I would do that. Also, I asked that any good I had done in life be credited to Jo Anna so she could reach heaven. Still, I worried that I was an insignificant spec in the universe and I was not offering enough like spouses who say they would die for their loved ones. That's when I offered the last thing I had. I offered

my soul to the Great Creator to be cast into the darkness for a thousand years if he would allow Jo Anna into heaven.

When I finished my prayer offering, a bright light suddenly filled the room, accompanied by a loud whooshing sound as if something had burst into fire. Shocked, I jumped out of the recliner, trying to determine what could have created a flash fire. I spun around and saw that neither the rug nor anything else was on fire outside the fireplace. Nor was there a cloud of smoke — evidence that a flash fire had just made the burning noise.

That is when I saw something that I had never seen before. Something that did not conform to all the fires I had burned using oak, pine, Douglas fir, cedar, redwood, eucalyptus, spruce, or manzanita, along with paper and cardboard.



Blue and Yellow Flame

Inside the fireplace, a column of fire burned just beyond the safety screens. I opened them to see the flame better. It was ten inches tall, an inch-and-a-half in diameter, and floating three inches above the firebrick floor of the fireplace. Its bottom two-thirds were translucent blue, while the top third burned yellow.

It was not in the ashes left by the evening's fire. Instead, it hovered over ash-free and wood-free brick just beyond the screen. And there was no pine sap or kitchen grease stain under it where outgassing could be fueling the flame.





No ignition source

Furthermore, there was no propane, liquid nitrogen gas, or butane to create the blue flame since it was an all-wood fireplace, NOT plumbed for gas heating. But chemically, wood, paper, and other carbon items only burn yellow and orange — not blue. Plus, there was no ignition source, like a glowing ember from the wood thoroughly burned away the night before. Only grey-black powder ash common after an evening's fire lay beyond the flame.

I watched the flame for twenty seconds seeing no fuel source, no ignition source, a hydrocarbon flame in a wood-burning fireplace, with the room still illuminated by the small source of light. As I shook my head, I said to myself, *This is impossible! This isn't a dream or coincidence. It's a sign in the fireplace where I have built so many fires for her. It's a sign that Jo Anna is ok. Her soul is with God in heaven!*

When the miracle flame disappeared, I was happy that my wife was safe. God had done as I asked. But while I walked away to get dressed and start my daily choirs, I knew that I had to fulfill my part of the bargain that I had requested. I had to go into the darkness for a thousand years, away from reaching heaven and Jo Anna. That thought chilled me.

Months passed as I wrote the books I promised before I recognized that I should tell others about the impossible blue flame. That caused me to talk to ministers in different churches about providing a testimonial. During those conversations, the ministers disagreed with my expectation of being sent into the darkness. Those talks moved me to review what in the Bible was said about being in the light or the dark.

I focused on the New Testament using my computer to find “light” information collected from numerous Gospels in the Bible. When I reached the second verse in a long list, I was amazed by how meaningful were the words spoken over 2,000 years ago.

In the Gospel of Luke Chapter 1, verse 79, Zacharias tells family and friends about his newly born son, named John, who would become John the Baptist. Zacharias said John would go forth and teach the people “To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

I had sat in the darkness, surrounded by the shadow of death. Light had appeared after my prayers, confirming that Jan was in heaven. However, I was not at peace.

Continuing my research, I reached John Chapter 8, verse 12. “Then Jesus again spoke to them: ‘I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life. ’”



That’s when I realized that though I was committed to going into the dark for 1,000 years — God wasn’t. The light that appeared in the fireplace room was meant for **both** Jo Anna and me. The magnitude of that kindness still humbles me.

**Lesson Learned #1:** So, I come before you as a witness to physical events, including impossible ones, that proved that we have a soul that will pass through the veil to another realm. Plus, I witnessed events proving that though we are small specs in the universe, the Great Creator does look over us and does want us to reach heaven.

**Lesson Learned #2:** And I encourage you to come together shoulder-to-shoulder to worship and rejoice in being a man or woman of God who follow His commandments.

And as Matthew said in Chapter 5 verse 16: “. . . let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”



**Lesson Learned #3:** As important, this testimonial also provides a positive message for those who **are not** followers of God. It stems from my learning that “darkness” is more than personal anguish and more than the darkness of my surroundings. It included



recognizing I was on the wrong path by asking and planning to go into the darkness for 1,000 years.

Similarly, a non-believer may find him or herself on a wrong path for these or other reasons:

- ❖ Choosing what you claim is right for yourself while ignoring what is right for others
- ❖ Events or your actions have made a shambles of your life and that of others
- ❖ Lingering regrets dig into you for mistreating or harming others
- ❖ An addiction steals your body and soul away from family and friends
- ❖ Feeling alone without family or friends who trust and respect you
- ❖ Feeling empty after chasing the glittering pleasures and lusts of the world
- ❖ Feeling you are wandering and your life has no meaningful purpose
- ❖ Feeling abandoned, hopeless, or persecuted
- ❖ Wishing you had led your life differently but are unsure what to do now

**Lesson Learned #4:** Here is my urging to people who recognize they are on one of the wrong paths. Eliminate the dark pain in your life by moving toward the light of God's commandments and guidance on how to live life according to his rules — not your own. Also, go to the altar and accept God's willingness to forgive anyone who truly repents their sins. Then, join God's family by being baptized.

And trust what Jesus said during his sermon on the mount as recorded in Mathew chapter 7, verses 24 and 25:

“ . . . everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock.”

### **Conclusion**

But change your path quickly because you do not know when you will pass, and the gate into heaven is only open to God's followers.

## **True To My Promise**

**John Norton Jr. B-3 29307**

March 23, 1973, began as any typical day of instrument training. At the airport, my stick buddy, Lt. Hank Atwood, and I filled out our instrument flight rules flight plan for review with our instructor pilot, Chief Warrant Officer (CWO2) Jim Cowart, a combat experienced pilot in Vietnam.

After getting a thumbs up from Mr. Cowart on our flight plan, we filed it and headed toward the flight line to pre-flight our Huey helicopter. Once completed, we called the tower for takeoff instructions and received the tower's approval, “Army Aircraft three-two-niner, you are cleared to runway One-Five-Zero for takeoff.”

Before taking off, we put on “the hood” required when practicing instrument-only flying. The hood is attached to your flight helmet, to prevent you from looking outside the cockpit when flying. With the hood on, you have to fly the aircraft only looking at your instruments, as you would have to if you were flying at night or in bad weather.

Little did I know that the events of this day would bring me face to face with the “promise” I made on the battlefield in Vietnam eight months earlier.

Our training went well until we noticed several of the mechanical dashboard instruments were fluctuating abnormally. We decided to make a precautionary landing at a nearby stage airfield. As we proceeded to the landing area, we radioed to Fort Rucker for a maintenance crew to meet us at the airfield to check out the aircraft. We landed without incident and went inside to a small crew lounge to await maintenance.

Somehow, we got into a philosophical discussion that intrigued me. Mr. Cowart began by saying, "Have you ever thought about where man came from?" It seemed a strange way to start a conversation. Hank and I shared some ideas about evolution and Darwin, but that was not what the chief had in mind.

I replied, "Oh, you mean where we were born?"

"No, I mean before you came to earth." The chief explained his belief that there is a place in heaven called Pre-existence, where we exist as spirits before we come to earth and gain our physical bodies.

It seemed like a bizarre belief, but it appeared important to him, so we continued to listen.

"I believe we come here as spirits from heaven. Our spirits are created by our Heavenly Father. Then, we are sent here to gain a physical body and be tested."

We shook our heads to indicate we had never considered that before. It seemed a little far out.

He next asked, "Have you ever considered why we're here on the earth?"

I had never thought about that to any great depth, so I replied half seriously, "I think I know; we're here to have a good time." That received a few laughs, but it was evident that Mr. Cowart had a strong conviction that we were here for a definite purpose.

"I believe that we're here to learn to obey God's commandments so we can be worthy to return to Him someday."

At this point, I was impressed at the depth of his faith. Not only was it apparent that he believed these principles were true, but somehow, he knew they were true. He didn't seem to care whether we believed him, as he wasn't trying to convince us. But he was willing to share his beliefs as long as we were interested.

Finally, he asked, "Have you considered where we go after we leave here when we die?"

I was most interested in this last question because I had thought about that a lot in Vietnam, wondering where I would end up when my time came to go. As it turned out, my beliefs were generally close to his. "I believe that we go to heaven," and he confirmed that was his belief, too.

I asked him, "Are these just your beliefs, or are they from a particular religious faith?"

He replied, “These concepts are the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

“I indicated that I have never heard of this church.



Salt Lake Mormon Temple

“Well, you’ve heard of the Mormons, haven’t you?”

“I don’t know much about them. I’ve heard of Brigham Young and a little about polygamy, and I’ve heard of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, but that’s about it. So, what do the Mormons have to do with the Church of Jesus Christ?”

He explained that “Mormon” was a nickname given to the church because it believes in a book of scripture called *The Book of Mormon*. That Book of scripture and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are centered on Christ.

He added, “You’ve heard of The Book of Mormon, haven’t you?”

“No, I haven’t. I’m curious; tell me more about the Mormons, where they come from, how they got started?”

“I guess the best place to start is to tell you about a young boy named Joseph Smith.” Mr. Cowart shared with us the story of a 14-year-old boy named Joseph Smith searching to find which church was true. As a result, he was moved to pray in the woods near his home in upstate New York. When Joseph knelt in the woods and prayed to know which church was true, he received a visitation by two glorious personages.

*This is incredible, I thought. How can a grown man like Mr. Cowart believe that the Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ would appear to a young boy in the early 1800’s in answer to his prayer?*

It was a negative thought, but as it passed out of my mind, my thoughts took me back to that hilltop in Vietnam, where I offered my prayer of deliverance and made my promise. In my mind's eye, I was looking down on myself kneeling on the battlefield, offering that prayer. And as I reflected on that moment, a quiet voice whispered in my heart, "*John, this is true. This is My work, and this is your chance to fulfill your promise.*"

I resisted . . . telling myself, *I can't become a Mormon. It's totally alien to my lifestyle.*

Then the voice returned, "John, this is your chance to fulfill your promise. You can accept it now or forever let it pass you by."

As I pondered that, and talked about the *Book of Mormon* and some of the doctrines of the Latter-day Saint faith, a warm, gradual swelling rose in my breast. It was a good feeling, different from anything I ever experienced before. In fact, it felt so good that I offered a short prayer that no one would come into the room and interrupt our discussion — No one did.

Once the Maintenance crew returned with our aircraft, we returned to Fort Rucker. And upon arriving there, I knew what I had to do. I would somehow become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I didn't know how I'd be able to make all the changes in my life that would be necessary. But somehow, I knew I had to do it.

After getting into my car to go home that night, I thought, *one of the first things you are going to have to do to join the Latter-day Saint faith is to quit smoking.* I had tried quitting several times before but without success. "Well, this has been an unusual day. Maybe if I offered a simple prayer, God would help me quit."

So, I prayed, "God, if You'll help me quit smoking . . . I'll quit right now . . . Amen."

From that simple prayer, made on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1973, I never smoked another cigarette. Three weeks later, I was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This took place 50 years ago, and I've never questioned my decision.

**Lesson Learned:** When you make an open-ended promise to God, especially to give your all to Him, you must be willing to accept where His Spirit want you to go. Even if it is something you couldn't have imagined, to begin with.

Some people will surely ask, but how can you know for sure? All I can say is that I received a sure witness from the Holy Spirit 50 years ago that has been reconfirmed over many years.

## **Finding New Life**

**Earl (Toby) Quirk E-1 29404**

In all the growing and learning in my 75 years, one profound experience was transformational. Certainly, at West Point, we experienced major changes in our lives, and we experienced growth, but transformation is more profound and permanent.

Like most of us in the class of 1970, my four-year experience at West Point branded my soul. I improved leadership-wise from a fun-seeking high schooler who did well academically and into an organized, responsible, patriotic adult. Changed, but not transformed.

My first assignment was motivated by a life-long opposition to communism embodied by the Soviet Union. As an Infantry platoon leader in the Third Armored Division, we were part of a strategic mission to make a stand against and then attack into West Germany from across the border in East Germany. Next, I was assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. I took an A-Team to Italy on a joint training exercise aimed at NATO's mission to combat communist terrorist activity in Europe. I left active duty after my five-year commitment.

By 1977, I had been out of active duty for about two and a half years, struggling in the insurance business. Linda and I had two great kids. Bridget was six. Brad was three. We owned a nice house, two cars and a dog. By all outward appearances, we were the model American young couple.

But I was broke and sinking deeper into debt. I had adopted a business lifestyle that was generously lubricated with alcohol. I still maintained some of the relics of my West Point standards, but those "Duty, Honor, Country" standards were eroding around the edges.

One day, my wife's friend Martha told us about some new classes going on at our church. I greatly respected this woman, so I joined her and Linda at the meetings led by lay teachers, mostly women. I listened to the presentations and silently criticized them. They gave a new lesson each week from a pamphlet called "Finding New Life In The Spirit" based on the Bible. We had homework, and during those study times in my home office something penetrated my pride.

The first chapter of the pamphlet was titled Salvation. There was a Bible verse to study for each day before the next class. I read them and got curious. We had to read two chapters of the Bible: the Gospel of John, chapter 3, and chapter 2 of the Book of Acts. Something new and strange was churning in my soul from these readings.

In the second class, I listened again with all my arrogance. At the end of the session, one of the leaders said, "We are going to pray for you now." That meant one of the leaders would put their hand on my shoulder and pray right in my face. That was a new thing. And I was uncomfortable.



But the following week, on Saint Patrick's Day, during my Bible study at home, the transformational moment happened. In the quiet of my study in my basement, I told God I would give my life to Him. In the deepest part of my motivation, I changed from chasing money and material gain — to chasing the Lord.

From that pivotal moment, God's love empowered every decision I. During my five-year break in service, I served as a reserve officer, an Infantry Company Commander, a Special Forces Team Leader, and as a staff officer in the Boston Recruiting Command.

In 1980, I reentered active duty with a renewed heart and a new attitude toward the men and women I served. My favorite assignment was as the Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, 12th Special Forces Group, from 1985 to 1989. The warriors assigned to this unit were of the highest caliber and motivation. My wife and I prayed for the safety of these men every day. Although we were all on hazardous duty as paratroopers, we never sustained the slightest injury on the various drop zones where we jumped all over the U.S. Higher headquarters even accused us of falsifying safety records.

My final assignment with the 3rd U.S. Army (ARCENT) took me to Kuwait, after the shooting war had settled down in 1992. As the Chief of Operations for Joint Task Force Kuwait, my team faced decisions that had international implications. Every day I sought the Lord for His guidance and wisdom. God never failed us.



Chief of Operations Quirk Working With His Staff in Kuwait

I retired from active duty in 1993, and God led me into full-time ministry as an ordained pastor in the Assemblies of God Church. Linda and I planted a church in Western Massachusetts, and we continued in pastoral ministry through 2013, after which

I served as the Protestant Chaplain at the Soldiers Home in Chelsea, Massachusetts; working alongside Father Patrick Healey the Catholic Chaplain



Memorial Day 2017 Toby & Linda Quirk With 95-year old Father Patrick Healey

I'm now retired and write Christian Fiction. When people learn I had an Army career, they assume I was a Chaplain. I reply that I was in the Infantry and Special Forces, and now I'm a private in the Lord's Army.

**Lesson Learned:** Trust God to guide you.

## Category: The Impact of Faith

### Importance of Faith

William (Bill) Wattendorf D-4 29012

When our faith is lacking, worry fills the void.

## **Mission First, People Always**

**Roger McCormick H-2 29156**

I became a believer in Jesus Christ in 1976 after the earlier births of Barbara and my two daughters, which I witnessed. I realized that if God could create the miracle of new life, the Bible must be true, including His expressions of love for His creation and the sacrifice of Jesus, His Son, for mankind.

**Lesson Learned #1:** A wise and biblically grounded Army chaplain at Fort Sill made the following statement to me in the mid-1980s and it has helped me to order my life ever since.

“Three things last forever – God, His Word, and the Soul/spirit of a person.”

**God the Father** knew from the very beginning that He would have to send His Son into the created world to pay the penalty with His blood sacrifice for mankind’s sins against Him. To those who believe this truth, the Holy Spirit is sent to serve as a guide, counselor, comforter, and helper for the believer to live a righteous life that is pleasing to God.

**His Word** is both the Bible and Jesus Himself, who came to fulfill the Bible’s words and reveal God the Father to the world through visible actions and spoken words.

**Soul** and **Spirit** of a person are used interchangeably in Scripture. They both represent non-physical, eternal part of a person’s existence that never dies.

God’s plan, or mission, is for people to believe what He says about creation and about His Son Jesus sent to be our Savior. We are to tell others and to join Him for eternity in His restored creation.

**Lesson Learned #2:** The Army slogan “Mission first, People always” fits well in God’s design. As soldiers, we are to accomplish our assigned missions, care for the people we lead, teach/train them, develop their strengths to make them complete persons, and ensure they are fulfilled in their tasks.

Jesus’ words to us include:

“Come to Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. “(Matthew 11: 28)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3: 16)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (John 5: 24)

It is my prayer to my Class of ‘70 Brothers and all others who may read this, that you consider the Lord’s plan and assurances in the Bible and choose eternal life with Jesus!

For a scholarly study of these terms and associated Biblical references, visit: <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/what-is-the-soul>.

## **Leadership, Character, and Religion**

**Robert C. Brand F-4 29168**

West Pointers reflect on what matters most in life and, equally important, what matters least. From my life experiences, I have come to believe that an unexamined life isn't worth living. I'm not alone in that thinking, as David Thoreau made abundantly clear in his timeless work *Walden Pond*.

My story about leadership is a saga of my life with epic proportions. Not because of what I have accomplished but because of what I have learned through my faith in Jesus Christ with the help of His Holy Spirit. Like you and all members of "The Long Gray Line" my story began in earnest on "R" Day. Thankfully, much has changed for the better regarding leader development at West Point since 1 July 1966.

## **Academy Years**

Back when "The Corps Was," far too much time was devoted to breaking down future leaders, which was sad when one of the hallmarks of Plebe Knowledge is Schofield's Definition of Discipline, e.g., "The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment..." Harsh and unjust treatment was much in vogue in 1966. And for two years, I practiced it far too much. I don't know what caused the switch in me from being a domineering, strict taskmaster as a "Yearling" and "Cow" into a "Firstie" protector of cadets from the tyranny of the dreaded "TAC." But I realized genuine leadership is more about serving others, especially your subordinates, than being the leader. Subsequently, the sense of compassion and

service I showed to the cadets in my company would become the hallmark of who I would be as a leader throughout my military and teaching careers and into the fourth quarter of my life.

All change or progress is not good, and that is true for cadet life at West Point. The Army used to promote a leadership paradigm called "Be, Know, Do." The "Be" aspect is the most important because who you become as a leader is far more important than what you know or do with what you know.

Unfortunately, eliminating mandatory chapel services in 1972 and taking the Honor Code out of the hands of the cadets diminished character development among cadets because those changes contradicted the essence of the Cadet Prayer: draw near to Thee in sincerity and truth, to choose the harder right over the easier wrong, not be content with a half-truth when the whole can be won, to guard against flippancy and irreverence in the sacred things of life, etc.

I hope you decided to come to the United States Military Academy because you wanted to join the Profession of Arms as a leader of character in defending our great nation that was "...created under God with liberty and justice for all."

Like you, as a cadet, I studied the *Art of War* and the reasons for war. Studying war taught me that it should be avoided at all costs because the worst aspects of man cause it. Hence, the reason for going to war must be justified on moral grounds first and foremost, not materialistic gains.

As you study the history of war, heed John Stuart's idea: "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things: the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks nothing worth a war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he's willing to fight, nothing he cares about more than his personal safety, is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself."

### **Officer Years**

After graduation, volunteering to go to Vietnam for my first assignment cemented in me the value of studying the *Art of War*, world history, human nature, and St Augustine's and Thomas Aquinas' theories about "Just War." Like World War II, President Kennedy's decision to support South Vietnam was about eliminating an evil in the world: the spread of communism. As history has proven, America may have done a lot wrong in waging that war, but the motive was justified.

After my abbreviated first tour, I was fortunate to go back to Vietnam. During that second tour, I encountered leaders who encouraged me to look out for my soldiers and master my trade. For the next decade, I earnestly studied and became technically and

tactically proficient. Most importantly, on a professional level, I lived my philosophy, "Do What's Right," especially when caring for soldiers and their families.

My army goals were limited. More than anything, I wanted to be a battalion commander. But, at one time, after being promoted to captain, I said I wanted to remain at that rank because field grade officers seemed too far removed from understanding the lives of their soldiers.

Through perseverance, determination, and the grace of God, I was selected for battalion command in 1985. While attending the pre-command course, I devoted much of my time detailing what I would do during my two years of command. I didn't want to waste a single moment of my time doing what I had aspired to be since graduating from West Point.

And I didn't. The two years I spent commanding the "Automatic Light" Battalion (6-8 FA) were the best years of my professional life because I lived my leadership philosophy which I provided to every soldier in the battalion.



Cdr Brand leading the men of the Automatic Light Bn

My philosophy was based on West Point's Motto, "Duty, Honor, Country," and I concluded it with the following: "... The words of the motto are simple enough, but they represent a complex notion about freedom and the pursuit of happiness that people in other countries only dream about. I pledge my allegiance to you and to that which is written here. If you do the same, this battalion will continue to set the standard for others to follow. God Bless you all. I know that together, we can't fail..." The linchpin of my philosophy was to take care of my soldiers and their families, and with the support of my wife, Debby, we did just that.

Following battalion command, I returned to teaching and finished my career commanding a Readiness Group. As with battalion command, I gave every soldier a copy of my leadership philosophy for commanding the readiness group because I wanted them to understand who I was and what I wanted to accomplish.

While the words were tailored for the Readiness Group, the essence was the same:

- ✓ Take care of people
- ✓ Do What's Right
- ✓ Duty, Honor, Country," etc.

In defining "Who I Am" in that philosophy, I wrote: "First, I'm a man who trusts in God..." In conclusion, I wrote, "To close, remember what I said about communication. Come see me if you don't understand what I'm driving at in this memo."

### **Civilian Years**

After commanding the readiness group, I retired and taught character and leader development to Junior ROTC students at the New York Military Academy for about nine years. I gave the cadets a copy of my leadership philosophy to better know who I was and encouraged them to develop their own philosophy on life and leadership. The essence of my philosophy remained the same. It was based on two principles and three character traits: Be a good follower, set the example, and exemplify integrity, responsibility, and accountability. It was titled:

By Light of Day . . . or Dark of Night  
Character Is the Essence of Leadership  
and It Always Matters!

From the summary of my life above, I have drawn three lessons learned that will be useful to your future as a leader.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Start early in your career developing your leadership philosophy, one that you will hone and build upon throughout your career. This will be your touchstone as a leader of character that will allow you to lead with consistency and integrity throughout.

**LL #2:** Share your leader philosophy with every member under your leadership, so they will know what to expect from your leadership and how every soldier or civilian can work in harmony with you to produce fine outcomes.

**LL #3:** I now realize how much better an officer, military leader, teacher, husband, father, and person I would have been in the first three quarters of my life had I embraced my faith more intentionally and deliberately. I fell for society's lie that one's faith is personal and should be kept private. Jesus calls us to spread His Word to the ends of the earth and to love one another as He loves us. You can't do that in the privacy of your mind. You must realize that you are a spiritual being having a human experience, not a human being having a spiritual experience.

### **Postscript**

As future members of "The Long Gray Line," you have a role to play in defending America against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Today, in 2023, the most dangerous enemies are domestic. You owe it to yourself and your country since you have sworn an oath to uphold the Constitution, to do your best to become a leader, a person of character. To do that, I implore you to seriously examine your life now. Don't wait until the fourth quarter because few people know when they are in the last two minutes of life, much less the fourth quarter. As C.S. Lewis said, it doesn't matter what your philosophy about life is or what religion you believe; there is no better way to live than how Jesus lived.

The world, including the United States, continues to try to solve earthly problems with human solutions when the only way to solve the severe problems of this world is with God's help through the Holy Spirit. America was founded on Judeo-Christian values and principles, which too often it has ignored, rejected, or abandoned, much like the Israelites ignored, abandoned, and rejected God for over 1000 years after He led them out of Egypt. For more than 180 years, America marched towards the ideals embedded in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America. Then, in 1963, some Americans began to drift away from what the Founding Fathers had established, and political administrations have been ignoring the Constitution more and more as the years pass.



## **Challenges and Faith After Leaving the Military**

**Gary Wimberly E-4 28919**

I retired from the Air Force in 1993 as Director of Systems Engineering for Air Force Systems Command. I began my second career as a manager for the Analytic Systems Corporation providing science & technology services for the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Science and Technology. Within S&T, I was assigned to the Air Force body armor working group and became the Air Force focal point for body armor.

I had some positive impact in that capacity. For instance, A squadron commander of an Air Force Security Police Unit that was being deployed to Afghanistan called me asking how to get body armor for his unit, even though the TO&E did not include body armor. I then took the squadron commander to the colonel responsible for budgeting for body armor to ensure the unit deployed with protective body armor. Another time, I knew from news reports that the Bradley Fighting Vehicle was taking hits from RPG's in Iraq. Years earlier, I had learned from my younger brother who served in Vietnam, that soldiers used chicken wire in front of their fighting positions to detonate incoming RPG's well before the RPGs reached their positions. When I put those two ideas together, I wondered if the simple offset defensive technique used in Vietnam could be applied to reduce RPG lethality against the Bradleys in Iraq. So, I called my classmate Tom Rabaut who was the CEO of FMC which made the Bradley at that time. He gave me the phone number of the Bradley's chief engineer. I told him my story and he said that he would take care getting a similar simple method to trigger incoming RPGs before they impacted the surface of the Bradley.

In 2011, my body armor contributions were interrupted when I had a sudden cardiac arrest while in church. A portable automated external defibrillator was found, and I was revived by the time the ambulance and emergency medical technicians arrived. I decided to retire a second time because of my heart attack. I started selling stock options and continue to do so now.

Nine years later, I was hospitalized again because of an aggressive and rare Lymphoma cancer. Two days into my hospitalization I contracted viral encephalitis and suffered a minor stroke which has left me with seizures and left inattention. In total, I spent 69 days in the hospital..

I had R-CHOP chemotherapy, which is a five-drug combination that kills cancer cells. Because it did not kill all the cancer, I moved on to a palliative chemo regime aimed at

relieving symptoms and improving quality of life for patients with advanced cancer, rather than curing the disease. I prayed a lot that I would get well and so did many prayer warriors around the country. I also had a wonderful family and medical team surrounding me.

Under the care of an integrative health doctor, I changed my diet to eliminate carbs and sugar while adding more protein and Omega 3's. My oncologist was surprised in 2023 when my cancer went into remission. I continue to pray that I will remain cancer free even though my oncologist says there is a 100% chance it will return.

I went from the use of a rollator to a cane. Now I do not need a cane to walk. I currently am not allowed to drive since I am subject to seizures along with balance issues due to medications that I am on. My prayers include being seizure free and being able to ride a bicycle which I am close to accomplishing, as well as driving my car again.

### **Lessons Learned**

**LL #1:** Before getting sick, I prepared a spreadsheet with all the family accounts and passwords so that my family would be able to do the family finances in case I was not able to. That safeguard really helped everyone.

**LL #2:** There is life after the military. I had a second career in an influential position, where I continued helping my military branch. My hobby of selling stock options has given me pleasure, financial rewards, and allowed me to teach my family about stocks.

**LL #3:** Changing my diet as well as the support of my family has kept me cancer free.

**LL #4:** My faith in Christ has calmed my fears and given me hope. I am thankful for the power of prayer, mine and from so many others, for they have kept me going.

**Climbing With God**

**Guy Drab D-2 29392**

We don't often think of the United States Military Academy at West Point as one of the better seminary preparatory schools. Indeed, after graduating in 1970 and leaving the military service in 1976 to pursue a new career in ministry, I found that the seminary I attended required an additional year of study to earn a Master of Divinity Degree for just that reason. That delay was a blessing, allowing additional studies in biblical languages, theology, and psychology that I might have missed. But many times, in the years that followed, I discovered just how blessed all of my years of preparation had been.

One such occasion occurred after I had completed my studies, became an ordained minister pastoring churches in Ohio, and then returned to the military as a chaplain. I had expected to come back as an Army chaplain but discovered that my plans and God's plans often failed to coincide. Furthermore, God's plan came with an unexpected and odd sense of humor. I was appointed as a Chaplain with the United States Navy. However, making the transition a little easier, I found myself detailed as a Chaplain to the United States Marine Corps.

Initially, I was detailed to the 10<sup>th</sup> Marines Field Artillery. That made sense. Thirteen years earlier, after completing Airborne and Ranger Training, the Army assigned me as a Field Artillery Officer. Thus, my initial assignment with the Marines couldn't have been better. I quickly gained a reputation as a "Marine Artillery Chaplain" who knew how to break down the breech block of an M109 Howitzer and call for fire (Not quite the same as Elijah calling for fire from heaven). But before I could settle into my new position, I was moved to support another unit that was losing its Chaplain just before deployment to Okinawa. I was reassigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Infantry Division.

Although the transition time was short, I was accepted into my new unit and enjoyed support from other members. Walking into the office of my new Executive Officer, I was surprised to see a "Ranger" flag on a staff behind his desk. He earned that banner by being the honor graduate from his U.S. Army Ranger School class, no small distinction for a Marine.

We soon said goodbye to family, loaded aircraft, and landed in Okinawa. Although we established our base at Camp Schwab in Northern Okinawa, a deployment with Marine Infantry is not a settle-in event. There were numerous training exercises and redeployments to other places in the Far East. One was a move to Pohang, South Korea.

Arriving in Korea, we set up operations at Camp Mujuk (affectionately known as Camp Up-Chuck). At that time, it was a tent city with one unfunctional outdoor latrine. By the time we departed, we saw the construction of numerous plywood huts for the enlisted, a mess facility, a small exchange, and a functional latrine. However, our primary purpose was to attend the South Korean Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC).

MWTC qualification entailed climbing to the top of a cliff with safety ropes, negotiating two-rope and three-rope bridges, transiting a three-rope bridge to a small platform suspended between hilltops overlooking a small river valley below, and then repelling off of the platform down to the valley. These were all events that I had experienced during my 9-week Army Ranger training years before. But it was new to some of our Marines.

During this time, when I was in my tent preparing for worship services, I was suddenly interrupted. The flap to my tent was thrown open, and the Commander of Weapons Company, quite agitated and animated, entered with arms flailing.

“Chaplain, you’re my last hope.”

Surprised, I asked, “What’s wrong, Buck?”

With arms opened expressively, he answered. “I’ve got a dark Green Marine (signifying that he was black). He’s a great Marine, but he’s afraid of heights. I’ve tried motivating him. I’ve tried shaming him. I’ve tried everything, but I can’t get him to do the training. You’re my last hope, and if you can’t do anything, I’m going to have to make him a cook.”

I knew it was serious for the unit and the young Marine. “All right, Buck. Let me see what I can do.” He told me the name of the Marine, a private, and that he was at the base camp a couple of miles down the road. I grabbed my canteen and set out to find him.

It was a beautiful fall day in Korea. As I walked, I was reminded of a similar fall day when I experienced my first encounter with God, a life-changing event, some ten years earlier. Again, the trees were gorgeous hues of color, and I saw a wild turkey along the road. Years later, as I read *Wild at Heart* by John Eldridge, these natural/supernatural experiences came back with a new understanding of how they impacted our walk with God. As I moved along, I spoke out loud to God as it had become my custom. I wondered what this new experience could mean and asked for guidance because I had no idea what to expect, what to say, or what I could do.

I arrived at the base of the mountain. Looking up to about the halfway point, I saw a series of Quonset huts comprising the hillside base camp. Marines were walking about, having completed their training for the day and preparing for dinner. Arriving at the camp, I asked someone if he knew where I could find my Marine. He pointed to one of the metal Quonset huts. When I opened the door, the sun was so bright outside, and it was so dark inside, that I couldn’t see anything inside except the glow of a wood stove heater at the far end. I stood in the doorway, waiting for my eyes to adjust. It took too long, so I called his name from the doorway. By then, my eyes had adjusted just enough to see the whites of a set of eyes and a set of bright white teeth in a smile beside the heater. He looked at me,

and then I saw his teeth and eyes rise. They kept rising. It reminded me of the scene and character in the movie “The Green Mile.” He walked to the door, filling it with his very large frame. He smiled at me with an honest warmth and identified himself.

I asked him to step outside, and something moved me to ask, “Do you believe in God? Are you a Christian?”

He answered, “Yes, Sir. I do, and I am.”

And so, it began. As we walked, I asked him about his faith, and then the topic moved to childhood. He was open and genuine. We talked about his family. He held nothing back and was so into the conversation that he was completely unaware that we had walked to the base of the climbing cliff that had terrified him earlier.

As I asked him about his relationship with his sister, I told him to grip the small rock above him on the cliff face with his left hand, place his right foot in a small indentation, step up, put his right hand in the next higher indentation and then step into the next indentation with his left foot. He then told me more about his family. He answered, question by question, handhold by handhold, toe hold by toe.

We were both so into the conversation that it seemed like just moments until we were suspended, side by side, about 30 feet up the side of the cliff. At that moment, I asked him if he knew where he was. Suddenly, he became aware, looked down, and became afraid. In such situations, our natural tendency is to flatten against the rock. We referred to that as changing into a *Lizaard* (an educated lizard), which is the worst thing to do. Once flat, the climber loses the ability to do anything or go anywhere. Immediately, I told him not to flatten out and to look at me. He did as I asked.

Calmly, I said, “You’re going to be fine. Don’t be afraid. You told me that you believe in God. So do I. He has brought us this far, and He will not let us down. If we die, we go to see Him. If we live, it’s because He still has something for us to do. Let’s trust Him. Now put your left hand there, your right foot there, step up, and tell me what kind of work your mother does?”

He relaxed, did as I instructed, and we continued to the top.

There, we sat at the edge, and I told him to look down. “Do you realize what you just did? Yesterday, you were afraid to climb this rock wall with safety ropes, trained instructors, and your fellow Marines. Today, you climbed this cliff with nothing but one crazy Chaplain and trust in God. It was all you needed.”

He looked at me and asked if I would take his picture with my camera (I always carried one). I did as he sat on the cliff’s edge with a big smile. Far below, Marines scurried about. I still keep my copy of that photograph today.

Then, I said, “Okay, let’s practice the rope bridges.” We went through all of the obstacles except the final platform repel. I didn’t have the ropes, links, and safety equipment for descending, but I was confident that his faith would carry him and he would do fine. To be sure, I looked at him and asked him, “Are you going to be okay tomorrow?”

“Yes, Sir.”

That was all I needed to hear. We walked down to the base camp, and I returned to my tent with a sense that I had done what God had called me to do for this young believer.

The next day, I was again sitting in my tent when the flap flew open, and in came an animated Buck. “Chaplain, it was a miracle!”

“What’s up, Buck?”

“He went through everything. He completed the qualification course. We couldn’t believe it.”

“So, he made it through everything without any problem.”

“He only had a little one on the platform repel.”

“That was the one that we didn’t get to practice. But he did it?”

“Yes. He got out to the platform and then hooked up his snap link and rope. But then he looked down and got scared.”

“What did he do?”

“Well, he positioned himself, closed his eyes, and then yelled at the Korean instructor, ‘Push me, push me.’ The Korean was much smaller than him, so he rocked back on the top rope around the platform and swung at his chest with both feet, kicking him off. After that, the Marine was fine.”

### **Lessons Learned:**

**LL #1:** With God, nothing is ever lost. Whatever experiences we have in life, good or bad, are lessons that God can use to bless someone and help them overcome their fears and limitations. It is what we are here for. God placed me in Korea for that young man.

**LL #2:** Moses spent 40 years in Pharaoh’s household learning to rule a people. Then he spent 40 years in the Midian Desert, learning to lead sheep in a foreign land. Then God guided him to lead a people through a wilderness to prepare them to become a nation. In God’s hands, all experience, good and bad, leads to an eternal destiny with others. We are here for each other. And He is here with us and for us throughout our journey.

**LL #3:** In God’s plan, the United States Military Academy at West Point may have been the perfect seminary preparatory school to provide help along the way to a young Marine who belonged to Him.

## Chapter 9 — Political Perspectives



Troubling political times have challenged the United States across much of its history. This chapter reflects some lessons learned during the late-1940s through May 2025.

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### Army Socialization

Gilbert (Gil) Harper D-3 29104

The military provides a valuable service in instilling values and reducing prejudice in our young people. In the 1970s, the Army led the way in equal opportunity and reducing discrimination. Earl Albright and other classmates played significant roles in this highly successful endeavor. Soldiers were socialized and learned to reduce, if not eliminate their prejudices, and they took these new insights with them when they returned to civilian life.

The military provided a second chance for people who would have otherwise been failures in society, ending up on the street, in jail, or the morgue. Not all of these social misfits found a home in the military, but some did, and one I especially remember was Levine. He was from New England. He had dropped out of school, failed to hold a job, was rejected by his family, and found himself before a judge. The judge explained that he was about to sentence Levine to jail, but there was a gentleman in the back of the courtroom who changed his mind – an Army recruiter. Levine took the black robe enlistment option and found a home – although I'm sure it was not love at first sight.

Years later, SSG Levine told me that when he reenlisted, he received a bonus and additional leave. He spent the reenlistment money and leave-time to go home but did not visit his parents or friends. First, he pressed his uniform and shined his shoes to visit his high school guidance counselor. He marched into her office and said, "Do you remember me? I'm the person you said would end up in jail. I'm not in jail, and I am now SERGEANT Levine." He then did an about-face and marched out of her office.

**Lesson Learned:** Everyone in SSG Levine's life had written him off as a lost cause. However, his service in the Army and the tough, concerned Army chain of command enabled him to realize his self-worth. I do not doubt that, after his military service, he continued to contribute to his community.

## **America's Political Gift**

**Ted Shadid B-3 28768**

Over my career as an officer and educator, I have been a student of history and an observer of political affairs. From this, I have learned six lessons about the extraordinary nature of the U.S. system of government, its importance to the world, how it works, and threats to its continuing success. I am sharing these lessons as possible ways out of the political rancor America currently faces in the early 2000s. Political hostility as bad as it was in 1808 when Thomas Jefferson said: "It has been a source of great pain to me to have met with so many among [my] opponents who had not the liberality to distinguish between political and social opposition; who transferred at once to the person, the hatred they bore to his political opinions." This attitude, at work since the founding, is poisoning our political discourse as it did then. From the beginning of our nation, conservatives and progressives have been bitterly fighting each other over the direction this great experiment should take.

### **Six Lessons Learned**

As a young officer, I studied international affairs and read the eleven-volume series by Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*. That series systematically explained the recorded history of humans across the centuries. Based on that combined study and my own observations, I gained a profound respect for our system of government and share with you the following six lessons learned.

**LL #1: The United States system of government and our nation's founding documents represent a distillation of the "wisdom of the ages" and enlightenment principles.**



Yes, it was an imperfect system put together by flawed men with an incomplete realization of its lofty ideals. However, when the Constitution was approved, Ben Franklin said, "If any nation is capable of making a nation happy, ours, I think, bids fair for producing that effect." I agree with Franklin.

It was the first attempt in history to establish a constitutional system enabling those governed to give informed consent, along with providing economic freedom and fundamental human rights for all people. I also agree with Abraham Lincoln, who famously said at Gettysburg that our system of government has proven over the centuries to be the most effective structure yet discovered to provide 'government of the people by the people, for the people.'



The National Archive Contains the Declaration of Independence

**LL #2: America's gift to the world represents a combination of progressive and conservative ideas, including Judeo-Christian values, the scientific method, universal human rights, and free-market economics.** All of these are different aspects of the fruits of enlightenment.

From its inception, America has been a beacon of liberty guarding this gift. After World War II, in a world order dominated by the United States, "government based on the consent of the governed" has spread throughout the globe. This happened under the auspices of the United Nations, which was the vision of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. In parallel, American Democrats matured the gift by emphasizing human rights, compassion, and vision. Meanwhile, Republicans provided a focus on liberty, economic freedom, and realism to our political system, which is the envy of the world. Continuing the tradition of Hamilton and Jefferson, the Democrats and Republicans have continued fighting, sometimes bitterly.

**LL #3 Internally, for the American government to be effective, those involved must work with one another to find reasonable accommodations.**

Why? Because compromise and cooperation are intrinsic to the division and separation of powers that are the bulwarks of liberty. Such a system requires compromise, which is only possible with reasonable political cooperation to accomplish the common good. Ben Franklin observed, "We have to ask every day, will we be willing to make the accommodation with one another to keep our Republic whole?" He also said, "Compromises do not make great heroes, but they do make great democracies."

Joseph Ellis, a noted historian and former West Point professor, said the following on the 2022 Public Broadcasting Service program *Benjamin Franklin*. "The Constitution is the framework for an ongoing argument about who we are to be as a people and where power resides. And it is presumed that each generation will be engaged in the argument and take it in new directions. What do we mean by 'We the People'? Certainly, we mean a lot more people now than we did then." Ellis also said: "Reasonable accommodations are a requirement for our system to work." Unfortunately, political accommodation and working together for the betterment of "We The People" is nonexistent in our current situation as digital social media has intensified division.

As one political observer said, "This country desperately needs, in my opinion, the political dynamic of a political party that is progressive and humane, and it also needs the dynamic of a party that is constitutional and constrained." He lamented there was not one party that reflected all these values.

In my opinion, such a party is not likely to be formed now or ever. Democrats need to work to make their party "progressive and humane," and Republicans should work to become "constitutional and constrained, which is another way to say "conservative." Then, the system will begin to function if the parties return to their founding principles, reduce the extremist influence, and are willing to work with each other and reach compromises that reflect the common-sense values of both political parties.

I observed good functioning government while watching the collaboration between Democrat President Clinton and Republican Speaker Gingrich after the 1994 election. The outcome was transformational agreements on the criminal justice system, welfare reform, and balancing the federal budget.

Unfortunately, in the later Obama presidency, I observed poor cooperation. The 2010 Affordable Care Act was an example of a policy that was put together with input only

from Democrats. The partisan nature of that law has hindered its acceptance and its effectiveness. Republican Senator John McCain bemoaned that fact and said, after he voted to kill the Republican partial repeal bill in 2017, that healthcare was too crucial for partisan solutions. He felt the American people deserve the benefit of a completely bipartisan effort. That sort of effort is the hallmark of how our system has worked most effectively since its inception.

**LL #4: Personal humility is essential in a system based on compromise.** This characteristic is another way to cause political leaders to work together, which enables our political system to produce beneficial outcomes for the People.

"I think I'm right, but I might be wrong" ought to be at the front of the mind of everyone involved in the political process. Approach all disagreements with the understanding that you and your political allies do not have all the answers.

Refuse to morph political opposition into personal hatred. Working together is the only reasonable outcome in most situations. It is the basis of the effective government our founders intended for us. "It is more American than apple pie." (PBS *Ben Franklin*).

Refuse to apply a conservative or progressive template to every issue. We need to judge each idea on its own merits, not on who said it or whether that person holds views you disagree with. We, of course, apply our point of view and perspective to every consideration. That is what adds depth to our political dialog. But we cannot agree only with those who hold similar views. Don't let anyone dictate your political opinions on any issue. Make a point of understanding all sides (left and right) of an issue before you form a position.

**LL #5: Social media manipulation is threatening our Republic by shifting more political influence to interest groups, political donors, and party extremists, who use propaganda to control us, the political parties, and the political process at the local, state, and federal levels.**

The increasing negative influence of social media since the 2010s. As Johnathan Haidt wrote in his magazine article titled, *After Babel*, in the May 2022 issue of *The Atlantic*: "Twitter engendered sometimes massive criticism of the smallest deviation from the accepted positions on many hot-button (trans/LGBT/women's rights, abortion, etc.)

issues.” He also wrote: “We're not shooting the other side. We are shooting the moderates on our side. . . . At present, the parties and most vital institutions are controlled by extremists.”

Gradually, social media has exacerbated the political divide by providing a mechanism for the extremes to ridicule the political values of those with moderate views. This extremism causes those who disagree to be silent and to withdraw their moderating influence from the organizations they are a part of. Thus, the extremes now dominate the most influential organizations and political parties. Polarization is not a new thing. The new thing is the amplification of the polarization by Twitter and other social media.

My fifth lesson stems from what Benjamin Franklin said, “much depends on the people to be governed.” And in America, as a democratic republic, we get the government we want and deserve at all levels: local, state, and federal. We choose our leaders, and they are answerable to us. But unfortunately, we have abdicated our responsibility.

As a result, more and more citizens accept representatives who stand on “party principle” and are unwilling to compromise those “principles.” That we accept such leadership from interest groups and tech companies without challenging them is the primary cause of the impotence of today’s government at all levels. We must regain control of our government and public square from social media and those who use them to manipulate us.

**LL #6: Collectively and as individuals, we must resist the manipulation of all media platforms to control our actions and reactions by thinking for ourselves and by not being afraid to contribute alternative ideas and opinions despite objections.** Refuse to be pushed out of the "public square" and political dialog. Such resistance will take back control and return our political system and the public square to a sustainable basis. Once you have chosen a side to support, everyone, from every political perspective, should work hard to win elections. Just do it in such a way that bipartisan cooperation is expected when the winners begin the task of governing.

## **Conclusion**

Our constitutional form of government is a gift to the world and worthy of our effort to preserve it. Social media and political extremists have perverted our political discourse, eliminated moderate voices, and continues to threaten our democratic institutions. Hating

someone for their political views is entirely unreasonable. Being hated by someone for your political views is also entirely unreasonable

We can no longer allow the “Twitter mob” and the political extremists on the left and the right to control our public discourse, suppress moderating opinions, and break down common respect and affection for those with whom we disagree. We can and must resist the sirens from left and right and restore sanity and community to our political dialog. We must have the courage to speak the truth as we see it on the critical issues of the day and make our opinions heard as a reasonable voice of accommodation and goodwill.

Our situation today is comparable to when Abraham Lincoln wrote to Congress before signing the Emancipation Proclamation, “We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth.” Then, the President and other supporters fought for political and economic freedom for slaves and the universal rights of all men.

Today, our system again faces significant challenges. However, with all its flaws, it remains the beacon of freedom and liberty for the world. Remember that Lincoln’s generation passed the test with much struggle and preserved humankind’s “best hope.” Will we?

### **Note about Sources**

The failures or hypocrisy of any men or authors mentioned or quoted above does not invalidate their contribution. The fact that Thomas Jefferson was a major slanderer in his time does not invalidate his insightful comment about personal animosity. Each comment or accomplishment should stand or fall on its own merits. No one is perfect. So, perfection is not a requirement for me to consider someone’s ideas. Quoting someone does not mean I agree with everything else he has written or might write in the future.

### **Integrity**

**Eddie (Ed) Mitchell H-2 29207**

**Lesson Learned #1:** The benefits and protections of our civil and criminal laws are only as good as the integrity of those who enforce them. That was true when Dr. Martin Luther King led civil rights protests in the 1960s as local and State police beat peaceful protestors. It is also true now during the 2020s when California district attorneys will not prosecute members of flash mobs after individuals rob retail stores of less than \$950 of

merchandise. Thus, those district attorneys incentivize lawlessness and destroy families and businesses as if those losses do not matter to society.

**Lesson Learned #2:** Pick political candidates with the integrity and strength of character to justly enforcing criminal and civil laws, like the 2024 voters in California did by rejecting lawlessness.

## **Being Politically Deceived**

**David Schroeder E-2 28755**

The most troubling lesson I have learned since the shock of Beast Barracks is **how effective propaganda is on populations whose information is siloed, whether by themselves or by others**. Tribalism plays a role. The campaign(s) to deny the threat of anthropogenic climate change, Trump’s “Big Lie” that election fraud stole a second term from him, and Putin’s lies to his people that his “special military operation” is to liberate Ukraine from a Nazi autocracy — are the three most dangerous propaganda efforts currently underway. History books of the next 50 to 100 years will examine the results of these schemes:

- ✓ Denying climate change threatens to shorten significantly the presence on Earth of many species, including homo sapiens.
- ✓ Attacking a free and fair election threatens the foundations of American democracy.
- ✓ Invading a sovereign country on specious grounds threatens WW III and possible nuclear conflict.

Obtaining information from multiple disparate sources, tempered by critical evaluation of source reliability, is necessary to avoid being deceived on crucial issues. Continuing my education, whether formally or as an individual, and purposefully expanding my horizons are steps I regret not taking sooner and further.

Despite being graduates of an “elite” American educational institution, and paradoxically, perhaps because of that status, it is evident that members of our Class are not immune to the effects of propaganda.

## Leaders Lied and Americans Died

W. Victor Madeja D-3 29495

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### Overview

I gladly went off to fight in the war in Vietnam, not knowing that I, and the American public, had been lied to by our government. But the useless, bloody losses of American lives, the lives of our Allies, and the lives of Vietnamese and Cambodians — opened my eyes.

When I realized the massive waste of American money and the military men and women not rewarded by fulfilled government promises, I became an advocate for two things.

First, I began warning future warriors of the government's deceitful use of our military. The following quote by Thomas Paine, from Volume 1, *Rights of Man*, summarizes my warning. "That there are men in all countries who get their living by war, and by keeping up the quarrels of Nations, is as shocking as it is true; but when those who are concerned in the government of a country, make it their study to sow discord and cultivate prejudices between Nations, it becomes the more unpardonable."

Secondly, this life experience is about living up to the Cadet Code: A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. During my life experience, I grew into believing the Cadet Code needed to be modernized to say that A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, **conduct a crime**, or tolerate those who do.

### Pre-Vietnam Learning

I grew up in Brooklyn (NYC) but never forgot that my Polish parents had been "P" and "Ost" Nazi slaves. They met in Munich and, not wanting to return to Soviet controlled Poland, they waited five years to become U.S. citizens. I was born on a V-E Day anniversary, got an excellent education in Brooklyn, and wrote for international publication in the Strategy & Tactics war gaming Journal.

In the 1960s, due to curiosity and family background, I began reading about World War II combat, war crimes, and the Nuremberg trials. After what Stalin did to Poland, I was staunchly anti-communist. At that time, I did not believe America was capable of similar evil. So, I was easily convinced that U.S. involvement in Vietnam was justified. My

pursuit of a military career was partly to repay my chosen country for its acceptance of my family and other refugees from communism.

I left for West Point (USMA) in June 1966. On the way to graduation, I won the Buckner Award. Plus, I designed the class crest engraved onto our class ring that we would all proudly wear. For the first time, a class ring included a class motto, *Serve with Integrity* ('70).

During our senior year, after I chose Infantry Branch and volunteered for Vietnam combat, I graduated with a B.S. degree in engineering. Unfortunately, that occurred a few weeks later than the majority of classmates in a holdback "class" of six.

### **Learning in Vietnam**

After successful airborne and ranger training, I led rifle platoons in South Vietnam. In 1971, I was with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. Then, in 1972, I served with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. My proudest military accomplishment is that no men died in the platoons I led.

#### **Lie #1: Helicopters will win the war.**

My epiphany about this lie came in Vietnam on Sunday, 28 November 1971, when a CH-47 Chinook Helicopter coming up from LZ 401 at Da Nang to Corregidor Pad at Camp Eagle went down. It took days to find the crash site. Due to bad weather, the rescue party did not reach the helo until 5 December. There were no survivors - 34 dead - aircraft demolished.

Maybe I had a form of "survivor's guilt," but at the time, my main concern was how vulnerable helicopters were to weather and antiaircraft fire. No matter how brave and resourceful you might be, as air passengers, you lose control. It's one thing to die facing an enemy but quite another to do so falling from the sky.





UH-1H Helicopter Crash During the Vietnam War  
Photo courtesy of pinterest.com

A common assumption about air power in Vietnam was that it was under Air Force control. In fact, the Army had the most aircraft and took most of the aviation losses. Vietnam was sometimes called a “Helicopter War” because the Allies used almost 12,000 helicopters. Nearly 80% of air crashes were by Army helicopters (plus 13% by the ARVN), and about 5,100 were destroyed.

Aircraft crashes were the third major cause of all U.S. Vietnam deaths (15%), and helicopter effectiveness was often poor when the NVA hid or retreated into cover. One example occurred during *Lam Son 719*, the final ARVN effort in 1971 to block the Ho Chi Minh trail. When the North Vietnam Army resisted in place with antiaircraft guns, the heavy losses shocked both aviation proponents and the combat unit leaders. They had wrongly learned to depend on air transport. Both sides knew what could happen when North Vietnam’s antiaircraft guns moved south. The heavy losses prompted re-evaluation of airmobile doctrine, but it came too late.

**Lesson Learned #1:** U.S. helicopters did not win the war in Vietnam.

**Lie #2:** *We are not fighting in Laos.*

It was a secret that from 1965 to 1973, the U.S. conducted aerial interdiction in Laos. Its dismal failure is also a touchy subject, making the claims of regular U.S. Air Force success doubtful. Despite the unprecedented munitions expended, estimates of American

bomb damage in the Laos campaign were so grossly inflated as to be imaginary. Overall, the U.S. dropped 6.7 million tons of bombs and fired a similarly massive artillery tonnage on 70 million people in Indochina. We will never know the exact numbers, but Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara conceded that over 3 million people were killed during the conflict, mainly by U.S. munitions. Did Asian civilians deserve that?

**Lesson Learned #2:** The negative U.S. response to massive “collateral damage” in Southeast Asia was a moral defeat that should have been expected from our World War II experience.

**Lie #3: The U.S. can win this war; escalation will help.**

While in Vietnam, in-country realities caused me to realize that I, and the American public, had been told several lies about why we entered the war and about its conduct. Reinforcing my growing feelings, on June 13, 1971, *The New York Times* began publishing excerpts from a government study that Daniel Ellsberg worked on, dubbed *The Pentagon Papers*. The first article in the series was titled "Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces Three Decades of Growing U.S. Involvement." The report revealed how successive US administrations had escalated the Vietnam War while concealing doubts that the action could ever be successful.

In addition, many more U.S. soldiers than the 58,000+ who died in Vietnam became casualties after 1975, which gets into the area of moral injury. There is no question that significant distrust of the U.S. government began with Vietnam. By 1971, polls showed that most Americans considered the Vietnam Conflict to be morally wrong.

**Lesson Learned #3:** From serving in Vietnam, I learned Leaders Lied and Americans Died unnecessarily.

### **Post-Vietnam Learning**

After medical recovery from the war, I volunteered for Special Forces, embracing the motto “liberate the oppressed.” After earning my Green Beret, I led a *Gabriel Demonstration Team* (5th SFG-A) for one year. My primary mission was providing training and advice on conducting in-country civic action operations.



Upon leaving Regular service in October 1975, I served in the North Carolina Army National Guard, conducting Infantry Advanced training in Georgia. Later, I earned a Sociology graduate degree (North Carolina State, 1977) to help me gain a *Foreign Area Officer* diploma.

From 1977 to 1990, I served in various Army Reserve and National Guard positions. Duties as an Equal Opportunity Officer (NCNG 1978-80) provided insights into the nature of American racism. Later assignments included war mobilization exercises at the Joint Staff in Europe (EUCOM) and Joint Chiefs (JCS Operations) in the Pentagon with a top-secret clearance.

After graduate school, My research priority shifted from WW II to exposing forms of corporate diversion, distraction, division, disinformation, and deconstruction, What William James called the “moral equivalent of war.”

In parallel, I came to believe that “facts can pierce the bodyguard of lies and prove corporate racketeering is widespread,” as Marine General Smedley Butler advocated in 1935.

### **Two Generals Who Distrusted Government Leaders**

**General Smedley Butler** challenged the legitimacy of American militarism before 1940 in his pamphlet *War Is A Racket*. He claimed that most American soldiers died fighting enemies who posed no threat to the United States.

In my view, this is unlikely for World War I and is false for World War II. During that war, the country fought for the values in *Why We Fight*, a series of seven films produced by the U.S. Department of War from 1942 to 1945. It was originally written for American soldiers to help them understand why the United States was involved in World War II and then broadcast across America on the orders of President Roosevelt.

In the last minutes of the first episode, actor Frank Capra stated the following: “For this is what we are fighting - freedom’s oldest enemy - the passion of the few to rule the many. This isn’t just a war. This is the free people’s life and death struggle against those who would put them back into slavery. The free peoples of America and Britain, of Russia and China, of Canada, Australia, and all the thirty united nations that have sworn that man shall remain free; that is the cause in which we fight. We lose it, and we lose everything: our homes, the jobs we want to go back to, the books we read, the very food we eat, the hopes we have for our kids, the kids themselves (they won’t be ours anymore). That’s what’s at stake.”

Further evidence of what America fought for are the *Four Freedoms* shown on the 1946 Victory Medal.



Freedom From Fear and Want  
&  
Freedom of Speech and Religion

Freedom from Lies and Greed are implied. After 1945, corporations continued to hide selfish interests behind the flag, so General Butler’s warning deserves attention because young people still die to serve corporate lies.

Memorial Day commemorates soldiers killed in war, but the United States has not had a formal declaration of war since 1946. Despite that, we should honor veterans who sign a promise with our government to protect and defend the U.S. Constitution. However, some paid or will pay the ultimate price of a bad contract.



Without getting off subject, we may recall that the motto of the oldest U.S. Military Academy is “Duty, Honor, Country.” For clarity, “Country” could be replaced with defend the Constitution.

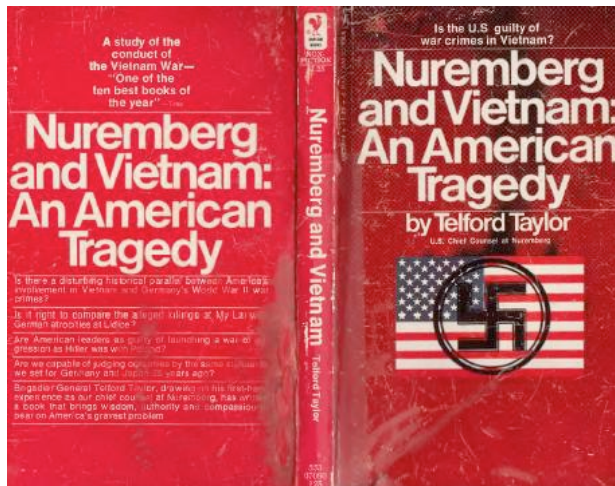
One issue I have is about the priority of duty over honor. Of what use and to whom does having Duty take precedence over Honor? In this life experience, I emphasize that “The few who want to rule the many” benefit from the misdirected loyalty of subordinate soldiers. Such loyalty is like that given to a crime boss. The bosses affiliate themselves with the country and indoctrinate others to believe “my country, right or wrong.”

As we recall the price paid for misdirected loyalty in the Civil War, Vietnam, Iraq, etc., why not consider an alternate motto like “my country, right its wrongs.”

**Lesson Learned #4:** If selfish interests can be hidden behind the flag, young people can be tricked into dying in service to the vital interests of Big Business.

**General Telford Taylor** is best known for his role as Chief Counsel for the Prosecution at a dozen Nuremberg Tribunals.

Later, in December 1970, another of General Taylor’s books was released, which compared U.S. conduct in the Vietnam Conflict to illegal actions taken by Nazi Germany during WW II. The book was titled *Nuremberg and Vietnam: an American Tragedy*.



Much of Taylor’s book, especially Chapter 5, provides an argument that the U.S. was illegally fighting in Vietnam. However, U.S. politicians claimed that the illegality of U.S. intervention in Vietnam under the UN Charter and other treaties could not be proven nor authoritatively denied and refused to declare war. Congress went ahead and forced draftees to fight in the Vietnam “conflict” that didn’t meet international definitions of war.

Taylor’s demand that elected U.S. leaders be punished for illegitimate actions in Southeast Asia was bad for corporate profits. Being held responsible for such crimes is not what criminals and their friends want. As expected in a corporate state, the book was sidelined by mainstream media.

For example, the media ignored Taylor’s elimination of the separation between “crime against peace” and “war crime.” He insisted that the Vietnam War should not have been started. Even planning an aggressive war violates one Nuremberg indictment (and 7 *Principles*). And the media ignored four other conclusions detailed in Taylor’s book which were:

- ✓ Military discipline is a form of slavery if the mission cannot be justified.
- ✓ Forcing draftees to serve broke the law.
- ✓ U.S. star-spangled generals and admirals became accomplices to murder.
- ✓ Congress and the President are unindicted murderers.

Plus, the media did not alert the public to the General's findings in the last four pages of *Nuremberg and Vietnam*.

"... Given the course the war has taken, and the depth and breadth of opposition to its conduct, it is both unwise and inhumane to compel people to serve in it against their will. For the United States, this is a new kind of war for our times—the precedents in Mexico and the Philippines are long forgotten—and one for which compulsory service should not be required.

In this respect, the views of the draft-age generation are sound, and it is only to be regretted that they have been so often pressed in a counterproductive manner. I suppose that few things have contributed more to the much-discussed "generation gap" than . . . most people over 45 were . . . involved in the Second World War, the purposes of which most Americans heartily approved . . . while no one under 25 has any meaningful recollection of any but the Vietnam War, which is widely regarded as despicable and a national calamity.

It has been well said that people get the kind of government they deserve. The Vietnam War was not the brain-child of construction workers, or Texas oilmen, or aircraft manufacturers, or super-patriots, or paranoid heresy-hunters. The war, in the massive, lethal dimensions it acquired after 1964, was the work of highly educated academics and administrators, most of whom would fit rather easily the present Vice-President's notion of an "effete snob." It was not President Kennedy himself, but the men he brought to Washington as advisers and who stayed on with President Johnson—the Rusks, McNamaras, Bundys, and Rostows—who must bear major responsibility for the war and the course it took.

The contest in Vietnam is a contest for the allegiance of the South Vietnamese. No foreign force can win that battle. That is why the root of the struggle has always been in the South. That is why the bombing has always been marginal in its final meaning; that is why the necessities of American politics now coincide with the necessities of the South Vietnamese future." That is how McGeorge Bundy, one-time close adviser to President Johnson, saw the matter in October, 1968, by which time he had concluded that 'there is no prospect of military victory against North Vietnam by any level of U.S. military force which is acceptable, and that therefore the "burden of Vietnam" must be lifted from our society.'

Bundy was candid enough to acknowledge that "this has not always been my view," but nonetheless, his recantation is oddly put. To *whom* does he wish the South Vietnamese to give "allegiance"? And are we to understand from the phrase "now coincide" that there was a time when the "necessities of American politics" did *not* coincide with the

“necessities of the South Vietnamese future”? By what human calculation is bombing, and the consequent loss of life and limb, to be justified if it is “marginal in its final meaning”?

As one who, until 1965, supported American intervention in Vietnam as an aggression-checking undertaking in the spirit of the United Nations Charter, I am painfully aware of the instability of individual judgment. Nevertheless, when the nature, scale, and effect of intervention changed so drastically in 1965, it is more than “puzzling” (as the Senate Refugee Subcommittee put it) that virtually no one in high authority had the capacity and inclination to perceive and articulate the inevitable consequences. How could it ever have been thought that air strikes, free-fire zones, and a mass uprooting and removal of the rural population were the way to win “*the allegiance of the South Vietnamese*”? By what mad cerebrations could a ratio of 28 to 1 between our investments in bombing, and in relief for those we had wounded and made homeless, have even been contemplated, let alone adopted as the operational pattern?

One may well echo the acrid French epigram and say that all this “is worse than a crime, it is a blunder”—the most costly and tragic national blunder in American history. And so, it has come to this: the anti-aggression spirit of Nuremberg and the United Nations Charter is invoked to justify our venture in Vietnam, where we have smashed the country to bits and will not even take the trouble to clean up the blood and rubble. None there will ever thank us; few elsewhere do not see our America as a sort of Steinbeckian “Lennie,” gigantic and powerful but prone to shatter what we try to save. Somehow, we failed ourselves to learn the lessons we undertook to teach at Nuremberg, and that failure is today’s American tragedy.”

**Lesson Learned #5:** Even with a nation of brave and honorable citizens, bad apple leaders can misdirect them.

Two years later, in December 1972, General Taylor visited Hanoi with the associate dean of the Yale Law School, activist Joan Baez (not Jane Fonda), and others. With his companions, Taylor regarded the 11-day 1972 bombing campaign that targeted Hanoi and Haiphong as “senseless and immoral” and even favored prosecuting U.S. aviators who had bombed North Vietnam.

Thus, the question of accountability for U.S. criminal actions in Vietnam remains. So do General Taylor’s warnings as a General, lawyer, and college professor.

### **Lack of Justice Across the Years**



Justice needs historical context to reveal the degree of governmental lies and crimes and the lack of accountability for its actions.

### **During the Civil War**

An argument could be made that the American republic failed when Louisiana was added to the Union as a slave state. The Civil War began in an effort to expand slavery westward. That's one reason why five slave states chose to remain in the Union. Whatever the initial reason, after Lee's defeat at Antietam (*aka* Sharpsburg), the bloodiest day of rebellion, no foreign government recognized the Confederate States as a country. So, it was no longer a legitimate war. It became an outlaw fight to preserve slavery.

Also, recognize that enslaver and slave are two sides of the same coin. Defeating the latter at the end of the Civil War in 1865 failed to disarm the former. Consider that the word "slavery" did not even appear in the Constitution until the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1865.

**Lesson Learned #6:** By forcing their soldiers to continue fighting for an evil cause, the Southern generals, whatever their source of commission, became accomplices to murder. So did U.S. generals in Vietnam after 1964, as explained above by General Taylor.

### **During the Vietnam War**

The crimes of the Vietnam conflict were not punished despite the *Pentagon Papers* revelation. Consider the lack of accountability for criminally bombing Vietnam and invasions into Cambodia. Even in obvious murder cases, like the March 16, 1968 My Lai massacre, only the most junior officer was court-martialed, and his punishment was limited to a few years of house arrest.

If we follow the money, we hear echoes of President Eisenhower's warning of a military-industrial complex and academic elite (1961). Examples of such racketeering are evident in the economy. Since loyalty to corporate royalty is not punished, the oligarchs prosper! However, "murder" is a crime no matter which side does it. By definition, it requires a conscious intent lacking in younger officers.

The main blame falls on presidents and war hawks in Congress. But none of them were held accountable for Vietnam. As at Nuremberg, the American justice system exonerated or ignored military murders. There was a failure to prosecute.

**Lesson Learned #7:** War is war. Murder is murder. An alleged criminal should not get to exonerate himself. One proposed solution would be to restore truth to the system.

The failure to do so can cause a **moral injury** to the soldiers who fought and the families who lost loved ones. It may lead to cognitive dissonance and possible suicide. Those who willingly fight often have a personal stake in the outcome beyond money.

Often, it's some sense of patriotic spirit, which requires trusting national leaders. Maybe the will to fight is focused against foreign or domestic oppression depicted as a form of theft or tyranny. Whatever the reason for the fight, at the point of intentionally killing innocent people, it could become a form of murder. The "collateral damage" excuse does not apply when the likely results are reasonably anticipated.

A key factor that makes it possible for soldiers to fight wars "for civilization" is that armies exploit and manipulate a warrior ethic, especially in young males (emphasis on toughness, loyalty to orders, peer pressure, camaraderie, etc.).

**Lesson Learned #8:** It's time to hold murderers accountable. Once you accept killers as leaders, then lying, cheating, and stealing easily continue. This is more than idle speculation.

### **Emergency Powers**

It takes brainwashing to get patriotic citizens to accept that it's proper to plan an aggressive war. Even after the indictments at Nuremberg, citizens had to be tricked into allowing undeclared wars. For example, there was no declaration of war for the U.S. invasion of Indochina.

On 7 August 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, authorizing President Johnson to take any measures he believed were necessary to retaliate.

*The Atlantic* (Jan/Feb 2019) discussed "The alarming scope of the President's Emergency Powers" and how they were supposed to end in 1976 with the *National Emergencies Act* (50 U.S.C. 1601–1651). However, it only partly rescinded presidential authority for prior emergencies.

**Lesson Learned #9:** Changing "I pledge allegiance to the flag" to "I pledge allegiance to the Constitution" would help reverse public brainwashing.

### **Conclusion**

My life experience of seeing Americans die based on government lies is reinforced by Jefferson's warning (below) that citizens are only safe by challenging the government's reasons to go to war.

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be. The functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents. There is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information.

Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe. – Jefferson’s “Letter to Col. Charles Yancey,” Monticello, January 6, 1816.

Thus, Thomas Jefferson advises us that citizen participation in controlling government is vital!

That is why I say the Cadet Honor Code should be updated as follows: “A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, conduct a crime, or tolerate those who do.”

## **The Impact of Christianity on the World**

**Robert C. Brand F-4 29168**

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**Veterans Day, 10 November 2024**

**Myrtle Beach Christian Church**

Good morning, I’m honored to speak with you during your service honoring veterans and the faithful colonists who with God’s provision eventually made America the greatest nation on earth. For those of you who don’t know me, I’m Bob Brand, a Christian, a husband, a father, a leader, a teacher, and a retired Army Officer, in that order. I hope you realize how much you inspire me to be the best version of myself. Every time I am with you is a holy moment in my life.

So, here I am once again telling my ongoing story of redemption, salvation, and service. I appear before you today in uniform to help reinforce our reason for being here today, to remember and honor the sacrifices of the countless veterans and their families who sacrificed so much to protect the American way of life. Pastor Danny and Cheryl Banks, thank you for affording me the opportunity to share my thoughts about living a life of service, a life that I hope brings people closer to Jesus Christ.

Before I continue with my faith story, though, I must honor my promise to keep Colonel Charlie Brindel’s memory alive. Charlie used to speak here. His life epitomized a life of service for his fellow man. He was one of the greatest American patriots I have known, but more importantly, he was a devout, humble Christian. Charlie didn’t talk much about his faith; he lived it. I picture Charlie when I reflect on the saying, **“For those who have fought for it, freedom has a taste the protected will never know.”**

Charlie’s family literally lived “on the tracks” because his father had deserted them. To get them “off the tracks,” Charlie lied about his age to join the Army. He fought in

WW II, Korea, and Viet Nam where he earned the Distinguished Service Cross, our nation's second highest medal for valor. Few people have given of themselves as much as Charlie. He lived a life worth emulating. He is at peace now resting in God's grace. He continues doing God's work thus fulfilling God's promise that for those who manage things well on earth, even more will be expected of them in heaven. I'm blessed to have known him and call him, friend.

I'm supposed to talk about honoring America's veterans. While my talk today will have little direct reference to what those veterans have done and are doing, I ask you to keep them and their families in your hearts and prayers in some special way today. The Dickey family that is being honored here today is an example of an American family that gave its all to support and defend the American way of life during World War II, one of the most pivotal times in the World's history. Leonard Dickey died on 6 June 1944 during the Normandy Invasion. Howard Dickey is Rhonda Deblasio's Dad. Serving in the Armed Forces of America is a noble calling, one that must be honored and respected by its citizens. It is a blight on our society that our government isn't fulfilling its obligation to take care of those serving now, and veterans who fulfilled their duty, many giving the last full measure, in preserving America's freedom.

My talk today will be different from my other presentations because I am going to focus on all the good that has been done and is being done in God's beautiful creation by most people, especially Christians. The inspiration for this talk came after attending the Myrtle Beach Christian Church (MBCC) 'youth led service.' The more I thought about what Tristen, Holden, Dylan, and Kylie spoke about, the more I realized how blessed I was to have Debby, the wisest person I know as my wife. Early in our relationship Debby told me two things she believed wholeheartedly: "Just tell the truth," and "You can't be one person in public and another person in private, you are who you are in the dark." Those two things should be embedded in the hearts, minds, bodies, and souls of every Christian who embraces the fact that Jesus is the Truth and the Way.

As I prepared for this talk I had two epiphanies, one here at MBCC during the 'youth led service' and one at Mass on 20 October when God reminded me about being generous beginning with serving others, especially my family.

Both events reminded me of how I have gotten things wrong so often because I trusted and believed in myself more than God. On 20 October I also read something by Matthew Kelly that shocked me because I disagreed with what he wrote: ". . . If this were the only life and you did not possess an immortal soul, I would encourage you to seek pleasure and avoid pain. . ." Matthew is my favorite author because it is through him that I learned how to let God transform, not tweak, me into becoming the person God created

me to be. Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain should never be the best way to live. Rather, it is what C.S. Lewis said: **“Regardless of what you believe the best way to live is as Jesus lived.”** And, that is what God told me on 20 October, serve others by living as I think and pray. As I listened to Tristen, Holden, Dylan, and Kylie, I realized that what they said and were doing throughout this community was living the life Jesus calls all of us to live.

The more I reflected on what they said, the more I realized that Christians are the people who have done more good on earth for more people than any group.

I have often told you that what you do for me exceeds what I do for you, and that truth was evident a few weeks ago when Debby, Robby, and I came to the MBCC dinner honoring all those who serve its missions so selflessly. Danny saw us as we entered and thanked us for coming at which you all applauded me. Being recognized for doing God’s work is humbling beyond the pale because what I do is only possible because of God’s love.

While wearing the uniform for almost four decades, I must admit that too much of my service was self-centered. Yes, I served others, but I also let my accomplishments feed my ego. I got caught up in the “World’s” view of success, the awards and accolades I received. Once I surrendered to God by cooperating with Him and making myself available to Him, as Matthew Kelly taught me, I was able to let God transform me into the person He created me to be, and lead me on His path to accomplish the missions He gives me.

So, Danny taking time to recognize me is humbling because what I do pales in comparison to the vast amount time, energy, and money the multitude of other people in attendance contribute to this community. And, Danny told me that there were probably as many people not present who answer the call to serve.

During the ‘youth led service,’ Tristen, Holden, Dylan, and Kylie spoke about being the light in people’s lives by spreading the Gospel; shared their stories about blessings, love, faith, gratitude, patience, perseverance through life’s struggles, commitment to become better people; and being grateful for how blessed they are to be part of such a giving and loving church community. They talked about their trip to Puerto Rico where seventeen children were baptized. Matthew’s influence on them to be spiritually full and to finish strong in their mission thus fulfilling their purpose in life is so apparent.

Attending that service was a holy moment in my life that I hope I never forget. It proved that I am wrong when I say this world is upside down. It is not! There are more good people in the world than bad people, and there are more good things being done in the world than bad things. Those two facts should not be a surprise because God created

this world and the people in it, and as the saying goes, “God don’t create no junk.” The “junk” is created by Satan’s influence on society, the culture, the media, governments, and evil people.

America is the greatest nation on earth because our founding fathers believed in God and recognized His hand in the creation of this great republic as expressed in the pledge of allegiance: “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Did you know that “Under God” was added to the pledge on 14 June 1954 (flag day, aka Army’s birthday) in a bill signed by President Eisenhower when the threat of worldwide communism reared its ugly head.

I firmly believe God still has a hand in keeping America the faith-based nation He guided our founding fathers to create. A map showing how people voted by county over the last 60 years shows a sea of “Red” conservatives not “Blue” liberals.

**Lesson Learned #1:** So, my advice to you is to ignore the media’s talking heads, many of our current political leaders, and the current culture in which we live. Rather, put your trust in God and do your best to follow the example set by the MBCC community as so graphically shown during the ‘youth led service’. You are not a minority. There are more Christians in the world than any other religious group, and they continue to do more good in the world than any other group, secular or non-secular.

I didn’t think I would be able to say what I am about to say about God and His Hand in continuing to make America the greatest country on earth because so many Americans have an unabating faith in God. I am ashamed of myself, but thankfully, I’ve relearned another of Jesus’ lessons about faith. I prayed for the outcome of the election on 5 November, but I didn’t believe it would happen. I didn’t follow what Jesus said in Mark 11:24, **“So, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”** I doubted for two human reasons. One, God won’t override His gift of free will, and two, the democratic “Blue” party was so adept at fraud in the last election, I was sure they would commit even more fraud this time. I forgot that the war being fought here in America for the past 60 years is a spiritual battle between good and evil. The Democratic Party has gone from being the “party of the people” to the party that condones any perverse notion that anyone wants to practice, and passes laws forcing other Americans to support the perversion. As Ronald Reagan said, “I didn’t leave the Democratic Party, the party left me.”

God’s Hand was in this election every bit as much as His Hand was in the outcome of the Revolutionary War, the war for our independence from tyranny and for religious liberty. God didn’t override free will, rather He inspired Americans to live up to the values

and principles embedded in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America, exactly what I prayed for every morning for weeks on end. And as usual, God delivered even more than what I asked for because come inauguration day, Donald Trump will have both houses of Congress led by the Republican Party, and the Supreme Court is manned by several of his appointees. There will be no impediments to putting America back on the path God helped our founding fathers build beginning in 1776. And for me, I will live my faith better by believing God will provide whatever I pray for as long as it is in accordance with His Will and Plan. And, that is precisely what Christians have been doing in this world, God's creation, not Satan's domain, ever since Jesus said, **“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”**

Christians have been turning the world right side up since Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and will continue to do so until Jesus returns to make His final judgment. Advancements in education, science, healthcare, equality, charity, freedom, respect for the individual, human rights, etc. have all been led by Christians.

Public education was first introduced in 150 A.D. by Justin Martyr. Our university system of higher education traces its origin to a Benedictine monastery in Italy in 528 A.D. In the 1500's Martin Luther and John Calvin influenced local governments to institute public funded mandatory education. Virtually all colleges and universities established in the colonies before the Revolutionary War had Christian roots.

Progress in science and technology has been inspired by Christians such as Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Faraday, Pasteur, George Washington Carver to name just a few. The same can be said of advancements in the arts, literature, and architecture. The idea that the world isn't flat was clearly established in the Book of Genesis, written long before 1492.

Advancements in medicine and healthcare have been led by Christians. Christians built the first hospitals beginning in 369 A.D. And, it is the Christian ethic about sustaining and protecting life that made healthcare available to people of all walks of life — rich or poor. The International Red Cross has its roots in Christianity.

Christian based charities feed more people and provide shelter for more people than any other group. Worldwide disaster relief is provided by Christians, especially Americans. Orphanages and adoption centers trace their roots to people and organizations based on Judeo-Christian beliefs. America, a nation created upon Judeo-Christian values is the most generous nation on earth.

Advancements in universal freedom, respect for the individual, and equality has its origins in Christian values, ethics, and principles. Virtually all “human rights” initiatives trace their roots to the teachings of Jesus Christ Who gave credence and respect to the

most marginalized people in society, the poor, the sick, the handicapped, etc. Prior to the coming of Jesus, women were often considered to be property; the sick and lame were ignored, mistreated, and ostracized; and children were often considered dispensable. Worldwide slavery was eliminated because of the influence of Christian values and principles. It was the faith based principles and values embedded in the Declaration of Independence that prompted the American Congress to pass the Bill of Rights and other amendments that provided equality to all people regardless of sex, religion, color, race, or national origin. Many of the current labor laws, especially child labor laws were written based on the Christian view of the dignity of the individual. Christianity inspired the economic systems of the world to create the “Middle Class.” Prior to that, most people were born into wealth or poverty, and remained in that state until death.

And probably, but not surprisingly, the most influential impact Christians have had over the centuries is to protect the sanctity of life. Abortion, the murder of the least protected class of human beings, has finally been eliminated as a “right” under our constitution. Christians are leading the fight against abortion in all the states. The sanctity of life issues extend to the elderly and the seriously ill and handicapped.

**Lesson Learned #2:** My point is that throughout the Gospels Jesus calls us to “servanthood.” So, we shouldn’t be surprised by the countless citizens here in America and the number of people worldwide who do their best to take care of people who are in need, whatever that need might be. Jesus preached that whatever you did for the “least of these,” you did for Me. His message, God’s message, is universal, His Will be done, and doing so begins with serving others.

Believe me when I say that I know I am preaching to the choir as I talk about the importance of accomplishing Jesus’ call to spread the Gospel and treat everyone as a child of God by serving others. I’ve learned from Pastor Danny and my own experiences that this church lives what it believes, especially in the area of “servanthood.” I am in the presence of saints! I didn’t stutter; I didn’t mis-speak. I am in the presence of saints. You are saints, maybe a little “s,” but saints nonetheless. Matthew Kelly wrote a book, *“The Biggest Lie in the History of Christianity.”* The lie being “Holiness Is not possible”, and it is a lie that Christians tell themselves. So, today, I am here to debunk that lie. To repeat, I am in the company of saints, and since all Saints are in heaven, Saints are Holy, which means you are Holy. Maybe only in a human context while here on earth, hence a little “s”, but Holy nonetheless. Humbly believe in yourself and what you can accomplish as a group. It is clear from this election that Christians came out in huge numbers to vote their conscious. Additionally, more Latino, black, and young voters voted Republican than ever before. Miami-Dade County voted Republican for the first time in 36 years. God inspired



people to vote their faith. And so, as usual, God did His best work through “God fearing” people rather than through a miracle of His Own Hand like parting the Red Sea. I believe the election of 2024 was a huge Holy Moment which will resonate throughout America for years, if not decades, to come. With God’s help, for the time being, we have saved America from Satan’s influence.

**Lesson Learned #3:** Holiness is simply living life as Jesus calls us to live, one moment, one “Holy Moment” at a time. Being a saint doesn’t mean not having “unholy moments.” All Saints were human, hence all sinned because they were sinners for some moments in time. But, they, like all of you realized that the most important thing in life is to live as Jesus calls you to live to the best of your ability, and you are doing just that. I keep going back to the ‘youth led service’ because that is what woke me up to the fact that the world isn’t upside down. The part of the world influenced by Satan as represented by much of the media, our society and culture, and many governments is upside down, and always will be. But, thanks to Christians, especially American Christians, the world is closer to what God designed than ever. Again, just look at the pervasive red color of a political map of the United States depicting how counties voted for the last 60 years. Look at how Americans rally to any call to help other people and nations throughout the world who endure natural disasters, wars, or any other condition requiring aid of any kind. As I said, Americans are the most generous people in the world.

Back to the beginning, we are gathered today to honor veterans, Americans who have served our nation throughout its history. To honor their service and sacrifice, it’s incumbent upon all of us to do our part to reverse the current political agenda that is determined to abandon the values and principles embedded in the Declaration of Independence and written in our Constitution. Today’s Democratic Party’s platform is simply repugnant and evil. It is anathema to what God guided our founding fathers to create. Election day, 5 November 2024 is only the first step in reversing the current trends in our culture, society, and government.

**Lesson Learned #4:** Please remember that while serving God is the most important thing for us to do, today is a special day to honor, respect, and thank our veterans who served this great nation which was created under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. Today, seek out a veteran to thank. And remember, his family did as much, if not more, so remember them and thank them as well.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today about how beautiful this world is and how good so many people are thanks to God choosing to come live among us as Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, fully human and fully divine. I love you all. Have a Blessed Day, a Wonderful Thanksgiving, and the most amazingly spiritual Christmas of your life.

## **Virtue Driven Actions**

**John R. Brown G-2 28992**

**& Greg Knight D-4 28946**

In the course of this life experience, I will use some terms in particular ways. The first relates to the word “character” which refers to all those observable human traits exhibited through the actions and words of a person. The second is the much-misunderstood word “humility.” In antiquity, the original meaning of humility meant something akin to the willingness to give of one’s strengths and abilities to a duty higher than self, without complaint. G. K. Chesterton pointed out that only the strong can really be humble. Frequent modern usage of the word often carries with it a demeaning connotation. I will talk a lot about virtues and morals, sometimes referred to by others in different ways such as principle, premise, worldview, foundational concept, starting point and similar terms.

**Lesson Learned #1:** The foundational lesson I discovered was that effective leadership, whether in groups of people large and small, or in just setting an example, had to be grounded in the conscious practice of three virtues: Integrity, Humility, and in Loyal Caring (or loving something else more than self). Across the years, I found that when I was able to apply the three virtues, it produced the fruits of courage and grace in me. Plus, the larger the stakes, the more pronounced were the effects of the three virtues.

### **You’re Wrong, I’m Right**

In early 2023, several of my classmates and I were participating in one of our weekly Zoom calls hosted by our Class President, Jim Sullivan (Sully). Those conversations often touched on current affairs and sometimes were followed with robust debates by e-mail.

On one particular call and in the resultant follow-up e-mail debate, we heard strong accusations by a classmate that focused on the immoral collateral damage and deaths to civilians was a result of U.S. military operations. The controversy began with some facts which were neither complete nor grounded in context. To this claimed misconduct, classmate, Greg Knight, responded in a way that captured both the reality and the thorniness of the question.

“You asked for feedback, so here is mine. War is hell and mistakes are made and people die. BUT in my opinion every combat action by the U.S. military has SAVED lives and made every country involved better today than it was before we got there and that includes the Middle East and Afghanistan. The best evidence to support my opinion is the

FACT that millions from damn near every country in the world risk their assets and their lives to enter the USA legally or illegally.”

Greg captured well the real issues in recognizing the good that can come out of violence while also recognizing that hurt and damage often accompany such actions. I also thought that he provided some balance and context to the debate.

I responded to Greg. “I appreciated your thoughtful perspectives. They correlate very well with mine. I also acknowledge that any dying associated with violence is always tragic and such violence should be taken on with great circumspection. Yet, where does one draw the line?”

**Lesson Learned #2:** To get to a good level of understanding when facing the most complex set of circumstances and the most human set of decisions and actions, we need to take the debate all the way down to its moral premises that fuel our actions during a real world situation.

One way to get to that understanding is by the conscious application of the three virtues. Using this self-assessing technique better gauges the merit of our moral “premises.” In Integrity, do we have or not have a full set of facts and clear recognition of the real world situation? Then, are we acting with Humility and Love of a Greater Truth?

### **Self Defense**

I continued in my email to Greg: “Would anyone of us NOT intervene with a victim, a stranger, getting mugged by an aggressor or aggressors? Would any of us NOT defend our loved ones, and our ‘hearth and home’, if they were physically attacked? Just when is violence against others along with the potential for related collateral damage warranted?”

I further responded to the e-mail thread stating, “After watching the actions of Antifa and Black Live’s Matter in Seattle and Portland, Oregon, in 2020 and especially watching people bringing quick-setting concrete to block the doors of a police station in Seattle, then dowsing the building in gasoline and setting it afire with live people inside, both my wife and I decided to arm-up and were ready to fend off anyone by any and all means who might come up our driveway planning such “mischief.” We hated the thought of it, but we also got ready mentally and physically. Thank God that we haven’t had to step up in that way, at least so far. And we eventually chose to settle in Texas in part because we could get good fields of fire and clear lines of retreat.”

**Lesson Learned #3:** We have an obligation to defend ourselves or others attacked by forces of evil (or even natural disasters), and that defense will likely be uncomfortable and could be very costly.

### **National Defense**

My e-mail continued: “For instance, the problem of national governments taking actions such as a declaration of war is multi-faceted. Besides all of the practical, political and cultural concerns, there are also moral AND legal issues.

As cadets we learned to distinguish the difference between the merely legal versus the moral. It’s far too easy (and I might add a cop-out) to spend a lot of time narrowly focusing only on the “legality” of it all, avoiding the thorny issues of the moral dimensions inherent in such a question. In part, our laws are intended to codify SOME of the moral dimensions of community and national life. We need to spend as much or more time contemplating the moral dimension as well; the moral ends up holding us to a higher standard.

I continued: “In Nazi Germany in the early 1940s, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran Pastor, theologian and pacifist came to an understanding that Hitler’s evil ways had to be stopped. That meant killing Hitler. He hated the idea of killing anyone (his thesis was on the Sermon on the Mount and especially about “turning the other cheek.”). But he saw his duty to others, and he set his mind to eliminating Hitler if he could.

He was eventually apprehended and sentenced to death for attempting to kill Hitler. He ended up at the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp in Bavaria, Germany where he was hanged on 9 April 1945 (age 39).

I personally believe that there is a difference between killing and murdering, and there are times when the moral issues override the legal. And in this fallen world we must often reconcile moral perspectives that could seem in opposition to each other. We should clearly be concerned with both the moral and the legal.”

**Lesson Learned #4:** Unjustly, wantonly and brutally murdering people without moral cause drives me, at great personal cost, to defend others by potentially killing the murderers. A second part of this lesson is that the legal is of lower significance than the moral.

### **Start Early**

All of the above, begs the question of just what aspects of our moral code should we seek to develop and then practice to help us negotiate the troubled waters and dangerous shoals of life-altering decisions. In my experience of a lifetime observing leadership of various kinds from COL Al Haig talking to our class about our poor attitude in our Firstie year, to some decades later as aa Commandant of Cadets told a large group of several thousand people at Eisenhower Hall Theater that “West Point’s first job is to develop the character of Academy Cadets.” (paraphrase)

**Lesson Learned #5:** Practice the virtues of Integrity, Humility and Loyal Caring every day, and seek to raise or train children into men and women who practice these three virtues of character.

## Spot Virtue

My e-mail continued: “And then of course, we need moral men and women, people of “good” character, making moral decisions ... more accurately men of high moral standards making good moral decisions. It is a heavy burden when making the moral decisions impacting life and death. And further, where do we find these moral human beings who we would trust to make such decisions well? This problem is compounded by the fact that there is no one alive today who is 100% of high moral character all the time ... none, nada, not me, not you, not anyone. But we are still required to act, so how do we go about this?”

I continued: “We should strive to look for those with a high degree and consistent tendency to practice three central virtues of good (and noble) leadership ... **Integrity** and **Humility** and **Loyal Caring** (love of something outside of self). These virtues give rise to the higher character traits of courage and grace ... and mark a person with the character to lead well.”

Leading by example or leading very large enterprises and organizations, it’s all the same. It is my position that anyone involved in the potential giving and taking of lives would be well-served, and would serve others far better, by striving to develop and hone their own integrity, humility and loyal caring in everything they do. None of us will perfect this practice, but we should try every day to live this way.

My e-mail ended with: “I leave you with the thoughts of Martin Niemöller, a contemporary of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and an unwilling resident of Sachsenhausen and Dachau for eight years, and his “poem.” It is sometimes referred to as “First They Came”:

“First, they came for the communists,  
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist.  
Then they came for the socialists,  
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a socialist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists,  
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.  
Then they came for me,  
and there was no one left to speak for me.”

**Lesson Learned #6** Seek out and elect leaders who demonstrate Integrity, Humility and Loyal Caring, and hold the elected leaders accountable for putting citizens first,

protecting our community or nation in large and small ways. Leaders should always put this mission first, their employees second and their own interests third.

### **Postscript**

Do you need evidence of the importance of these virtues? Look at the soldier or first responder who puts himself or herself into harm's way to protect or help others. For example, the soldier risking his life to protect a fallen brother, the young pizza delivery man who did not know where his life was going, but on his route one night came upon a house on fire, rushed in to save a young mother and three children and nearly died himself. Or Daniel Penny ... and many, many more. None of those people were perfect all of the time, but they did the right thing when called upon.

**Integrity?** Yes, to the idea that life is precious, and that vulnerable people deserve to be helped and protected. **Humility?** Yes, to the idea that life isn't just about me but about others and larger purposes than self. **Loyal Caring?** Yes, to the idea that it's critical to love something outside of self, bigger than self.

So, to all who may read this, I wish you peace and strength in your noble calling.

## Chapter 10 — Timeless Lessons



The following serious and funny lessons learned can be applied during any phase of one's life.

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### Category: Priorities

#### **Our Purpose**

**Gregory Allen Holton F-3 28815**

Recognize that as West Pointers, our walk in life is to serve with integrity.

#### **Six Keys To A Good Life**

**William (Bill) Elliot D-3 28999**

Stay Positive - Enjoy the Humor

Pursue Passions - Make Friends

Fall in Love - Serve with Integrity

## Harmful Loyalty

Joe Reeder E-1 29138

A key life lesson for me was drawn from a significant value — loyalty and its harmful application. My first memory of confronting this value was at West Point, grappling with the West Point Honor Code's toleration clause – “A Cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.” In contrast, the Naval Academy's honor code lacks the non-toleration clause that governs us as cadets.

Over a lifetime, almost everyone will face the tension between tolerating dishonesty versus loyalty to trusted friends. Fortunately, I never witnessed any fellow cadet cheating or otherwise running afoul of our Honor Code. For several reasons, some recounted below, I believed that failure to throw a “red flag” on dishonesty discredited West Point, our Army, and our country.

In law school, I got to know David McWilliams, one of the assistant football coaches at the University of Texas, who later became head coach. He shared a story that never left me about what head coach Darrell Royal told his assistant coaches, including McWilliams: “I love each of you like family, either because I played or coached with you or was your coach. But if any of you ever cheat recruiting football players for Texas, you have dishonored me and cheated the University of Texas, and I will fire you without ceremony.”

Many know the story of England's King Henry the Fifth, hanging his best friend for looting a French Church. Then, there was Supreme Allied Commander Eisenhower's very public reprimand of General Patton (one of his favorite officers) for mistreating a soldier.

In both historical instances, the reprimand was issued despite the high office of the offender and how well thought of the offender was. Thus, doing what was right was more important than personal loyalty.

Our personal lives and what we know from press accounts provide other poignant examples of good or bad choices made when unvarnished honesty collides with personal loyalty. That includes U.S. Presidents having wayward family members they fail to call out, thus exalting family loyalty **above** not lying, cheating, or stealing.

While serving in the Pentagon as the Under Secretary of the Army and later as a leader in one of the world's ten largest law firms, I've personally witnessed examples of this tug of war. In the Pentagon, I saw examples of both acquiescence and exposure of cover-ups. In the law firm, I also saw a small handful of law partners who chose loyalty over **no** tolerance after learning that a fellow partner acted corruptly. However, I maintained a no-tolerance approach.



**Lesson Learned:** Several of these examples of mis-prioritizing loyalty to an individual or an organization over integrity resulted in worldwide negative press and lost careers.

### **Ten Attributes For Life**

**William (Bill) Coy G-1 29423**

1. Never surrender integrity for a position.
2. Rank hath responsibility and nobility rather than privilege.
3. Helping a classmate or fellow graduate is living a sacred oath.
4. Always plan, prepare, constantly check and punctuate.
5. If training conducted or performed by a subordinate deserves credit, praise him/her. If more or follow-on training is required, persist in getting it scheduled.
6. Patton quoted: In execution, “Audacity, Audacity, Audacity.”
7. Unity, fraternity, loyalty, in opportunity.
8. Racism is bait for division. Reject its very premise.
9. Plan to do tasks once, but well. If not achieved, installing will cost triple: done, undone, and redone!
10. General “Lightning” Joe Collins’ quote about troops: “They are the nation’s richest treasure.”

### **Mottos, Codes, and Prayers**

**Robert Stewart B-3 29439**

I don’t know who was responsible for our Class Motto, but I am indebted to them. “Serve with Integrity” has been my guide during a thirty-year career in the Army, jobs after the Army, and during retirement. I look back on mottos from other classes and find ours to be one with true guidance and meaning for a lifetime. Integrity is “The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles – moral uprightness.”

In a book about C. S. Lewis titled *Not a Tame Lion* by Terry Glaspey, the author discusses the difference between values and virtue. “A value is an idea we hold in our head about how things should be. Virtue, on the other hand, is a quality of character that leads to action.”

I feel there is an important difference between social and our Class values. Values of institutions and society (principles, standards of conduct) can change over time, but our class values should not. Virtue is a quality of character to do what is morally right that does not change. Implementing the Class of 1970's motto demonstrates what we adopted as cadets and applied throughout our careers.

At West Point, we embraced the following:

- ✓ **The Academy Motto** is "Duty, Honor, Country."
- ✓ **The Honor Code** states, "A Cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do."
- ✓ **The Cadet Prayer** that inspires us to "choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong."

Our Class Motto complimented all of these and helped form a foundation to guide us through our military and civilian careers. I have been constantly aware of the guidance from the Academy Motto, Honor Code, and Cadet Prayers. They started at the Academy and have impacted my life for over 50 years.

As a platoon leader in Vietnam, accurate reporting and correct decisions were expected and demanded. My decisions impacted soldiers' lives. Throughout my career, I have had to accept the results of inspections, whether good or bad and make the required corrections. I also had to accept responsibility for what my unit did or did not do while in command and be responsible for taking care of soldiers. Our class motto proved to be a constant reminder for my decisions.

A particular example was the Aviation Safety Center's investigation into a UH-60 accident in the unit I commanded. No one was injured, but the aircraft had significant damage. I decided it was best to let the investigators know what we had done wrong before they found it. That act caught them off guard. The chain of command understood the risks the training involved and what we had done to minimize those risks, and there were no repercussions.

After the Army, the two mottos, code and prayer, carried me through time as a high school math teacher, high school lacrosse coach, DOD contractor training units preparing to deploy overseas, and making contributions to my church and community. For example, as a head lacrosse coach for 18 years, I set an example and passed on some of these virtues as my position coaches taught the students the game. We wanted them to excel at the game, but more importantly, we wanted them to excel as future citizens and leaders.

**Lesson Learned:** Hard decisions must be made in Army and in civilian life. The two mottos, code, and prayer will help guide your life even when your decisions are unpopular. Although difficult to measure, I continue to be grateful for the impact of our class motto and try to live by it daily.

### **Harder Right**

**John Hanna D-3 28843**

Choosing the “Harder Right over the Easier Wrong” is a principle we all learned on Day 1 of Beast Barracks. It doesn’t get much simpler than that. It is the phrase all of my children remember as my guidepost.

Looking back 50+ years later, the only decisions that I even dwell on are the wrong decisions. Fortunately, they are few and far between. Yet, they become a burden to bear and a reminder of the choices one makes during life’s journey.

**Lesson learned:** Remember the Cadet Prayer, continue to pray for wisdom to choose the harder right, embrace it, and in the end, with your conscience clear, your life may be fulfilled.

### **Happiness**

**Steven Wilson I-3 28809**

As a leader, I had to accept that I was not responsible for my people’s happiness. The best I could do was maintain an environment that allowed them to be happy.

### **What’s Important**

**Paul Passaro F-2 29133**

Determine who or what is most important in your life and establish a vertical hierarchy or priority. Then, live that way. Here is the hierarchy I have learned to live by.

- ❖ When confronted with a dilemma on what to do, your values are important – DO THE RIGHT THING ALWAYS.

- ❖ Your educational level does not make you better than anyone else – or lesser than anyone else. Never act or think that you are better than a subordinate. You are not. You may be in charge, you may be more educated, but you are equals. Forget that, and no college or higher degree will matter in the least.
- ❖ There is a distinct difference between arrogance and confidence. Confidence comes from study and training.
- ❖ Friendship requires sacrifice. It's not always convenient. It may require travel and time, but we will be on the receiving end if we are on the giving end.
- ❖ Develop an inner circle of counselors and advisers who share your values and willingness to tell you like it is – not what you want to hear.

### **Miller's Maxims**

**Richard (Chix) Miller C-4 29219**

Here are three maxims I read somewhere and try to live by.

**#1** Regret and worry are the two biggest robbers of joy. Avoid them. The divine precious present is what counts.

**#2** Happiness is not a function of material conditions or circumstances.

**#3** Pessimism is a scourge. Have you ever heard someone say, "I want to follow him; he's a pessimist."

I had a law partner who graduated from Harvard. He was brilliant and wealthy and lived to be 95-years-old. But he seldom was happy because he did not live by these maxims.

For example, one of the things that he was fond of saying in the morning was, "I have a horrible day coming up."

## **Don't Worry, Be Happy**

**Anthony (Tony) Barre B-3 28769**

I have enjoyed the first 75 years of my life more than many of my contemporaries by embracing folk singer Bobby McFerrin's motto: "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

Many significant unfavorable events in life occur or threaten to occur, which we cannot affect. It is common to spend emotional energy on these events to no avail. In addition, I have discovered that when there is something significant that I need to deal with, I am not able to plan rationally until I calm down emotionally.

This is not to say one should not take anything seriously — quite the opposite. When a problem arises that merits energy, one should commit to the solution wholeheartedly.

**Lesson Learned:** However, the energy wasted worrying about the problem detracts from focusing on the solution.

Many studies find that optimistic people have better outcomes when ill. For example, a study at Duke & Columbia Universities found that optimistic folks required 30% less hospitalization when faced with angina.

My mother-in-law advocated: "Don't borrow trouble."

And Monty Python's Life of Brian movie also encourages taking a positive approach:

"Some things in life are bad  
They can really make you mad  
Other things just make you swear and curse  
When you're chewing on life's gristle  
Don't grumble, give a whistle  
And this'll help things turn out for the best  
And  
Always look on the bright side of life."

## **Three Valued Skills**

**Don Edmonston D-4 28781**

My time at West Point is now a distant memory. However, I cling to some things I absorbed during my four years as a cadet.

**#1** The value of fitness has stayed with me and helped my health as I have aged.

**#2** The value of honesty. The honor code we learned as cadets has helped me to make good decisions in work and life that I'm happy with. It's harder to cover a lie than to tell the truth.

**#3** The value of overcommunicating. In Psych class, I learned to communicate, communicate, and communicate. Especially when dealing with others who have different backgrounds.

## **Humility**

**Greg Holton F-3 28815**

The secret to success is humility. Let your talents and abilities speak for themselves.

## **Time**

**Greg Holton F-3 28815**

Time is a precious commodity. When you have time on your hands, ask yourself what is the best use of my time right now? Then do it.

## **Never Enough**

**David Trammel B-2 28978**

I learned this from a Tank Battalion Maintenance Warrant Officer: There is never enough time to do it right, but there is always time to do it twice.

### **Risk**

**Carl Funke G-4 29051**

Don't risk more than you can afford to lose.

### **Do It To Get It**

**Cesare F. Rosati G-1 28793**

The way you get the job you want next is to do the job you've got now exceptionally well.

## **Category: Humor**

### **Getting Older**

**Steven Wilson I-3 28809**

I often remind my son. There is nothing he can do that I can't do. It just takes me longer and hurts more!

### **Bar or Church**

**Harry Crumling I-3 29470**

I learned this important lesson from Major John Martling, USMA '55, my Firstie year psychology professor: "Never marry a woman you met in a bar. Best to marry a woman you met in church."

## **Four Rules For A Long Life**

**Howard (Howie) Parker G-3 29230**

- #1 Never eat at a place called “Mom’s”
- #2 Never play cards with a man named Ace.
- #3 Never accept a drink from a member of the Grateful Dead.
- #4 Never get into a gunfight with a pistol whose caliber starts with a number less than four.

## **Platoon Humor**

**Edwin K (EK) Smith H-1 28846**

- ✓ My first battalion commander uttered this just before jumping out of the headquarters building in Baumholder, “Have patience, flexibility, and a sense of humor!”
- ✓ Cherish the moment when you are inspecting your first platoon, particularly if PVT Cummings is standing next to PVT Goings.
- ✓ When the government of the United States is handing 17- and 18-year-old soldiers hand grenades, things are not going well.
- ✓ It inspires confidence if all can hit what they aim at.
- ✓ The use of tactical nuclear weapons should only be used after giving focused thought about them.
- ✓ Every single soldier, no matter how effective or not, has a mother who loves that soldier. If nothing else, respect the mother.



## Alma Mater

Now that our Class of 1970 has completed its task to gather life experiences for you, we end with the Academy's song, sung at the conclusion of every Founders Day celebration.

(2008 gender-neutral version)

|

Hail, Alma Mater dear,  
To us be ever near,  
Help us thy motto bear  
Through all the years.  
Let duty be well performed,  
Honor be e'er untarned,  
Country be ever armed,  
West Point, by thee.

|

Guide us, thy own, aright,  
Teach us by day, by night,  
To keep thine honor bright,  
For thee to fight.  
When we depart from thee,  
Serving on land or sea,  
May we still loyal be,  
West Point, to thee.

|

And when our work is done,  
Our course on earth is run,  
May it be said, 'Well Done;  
Be Thou At Peace.'  
E'er may that line of gray  
Increase from day to day,  
Live, serve, and die, we pray,  
West Point, for thee.

## References

The documents below provide additional information for the readers or researchers of the lessons learned in earlier chapters of this book.

### #1 Three Class of 1970 published hardcopy and digital books

- Hardcopy: *Legacy of the West Point Class of 1970*, released in 2020 for our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion, which was not conducted because of the China Covid pandemic.
- Hardcopy & eBook: *Heritage of the West Point Class of 1970*, released in 2025 for our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion
- eBook: *Serve With Integrity Life Experiences and Lessons Learned*, released in 2025 for our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion

### #2 *The Corps* Written by U.S.M.A. Chaplain Herbert Shipman ca. 1902.

First sung at the dedication of the new Cadet Chapel in 1910. Chaplain Shipman later became the Suffragan Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. The Right Reverend Shipman is interred in the West Point cemetery.

### #3 Win Planning References

- ✓ *The Origins and Development of the National Training Center 1976-1984*  
by Anne W. Chapman, Office of the Command Historian, TRADOC  
[https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/069/69-3/CMH\\_Pub\\_69-3.pdf](https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/069/69-3/CMH_Pub_69-3.pdf)
- ✓ *Military Misfortunes -The Anatomy of Failure in War*, by Elliot A. Cohen and John Gooch
- ✓ *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu
- ✓ *My Experiences in the World War*, by General Pershing
- ✓ General Rommel's diary from WW I: *Infantry Attacks*
- ✓ General Rommel's diary from WW II.
- ✓ *The Rommel Papers*, edited by B. h. Liddel Hart
- ✓ U.S. Army Historian S.L.A. Marshall's books:
  - *Battle At Best*
  - *Island Victory*

- *Sinai Victory: Command Decisions in History's Shortest War, Israel's Hundred Hour Conquest of Egypt East of Suez, Autumn 1956*
- *Vietnam*
- *Battles in the Monsoon: Campaigning in the Central Highland, Vietnam, Summer 1986*
- *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War*
- ✓ *Certain Victory, the U.S. Army in the Gulf War*, co-authored by Terry Johnson Class of 1970
- ✓ *The Military Decision Making Process - Time for a Change*, By Major Wilson A. Shoffner  
School of Advanced Military Studies  
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<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA381816.pdf>
- ✓ FM 101-5 *Staff Organization and Operations*

#4 Classmate Frank Monaco's 911 Article in the Atlantic Magazine  
<https://er.educause.edu/-/media/files/article-downloads/eqm0144.pdf>

#5 General Telford Taylor, *Nuremberg and Vietnam: an American Tragedy*.

#6 Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*

#7 2022 Public Broadcasting Service program: *Benjamin Franklin*

#8 Colin Powell, autobiography, *My American Journey*

**#9** West Point magazine, Volume 12, Issue 1 (Winter 2022) at p. 48, reflecting USCC Pam 15-1 “Honor Process.”

**#10** Stephen R. Covey, the brilliant author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

**#11** The Army historical report, *A Training Revolution*

**#12** Biblical references:

<https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/what-is-the-soul>.

- Matthew Kelly wrote the book, “*The Biggest Lie in the History of Christianity*.”
- *Wild at Heart* by John Eldridge
- Johnathan Haidt magazine article titled, *After Babel* in the May 2022 issue of *The Atlantic*

## Glossary

<b>AATD</b>	Applied Aviation Technology Directorate
<b>ACE</b>	Army Corps of Engineers
<b>ACE</b>	Assistant Chief of Engineers
<b>ACR</b>	Armored Cavalry Regiment
<b>ACSIM</b>	Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management
<b>AFB</b>	Air Force Base
<b>AFKN</b>	Armed Forces Korea Network (radio)
<b>AGI</b>	Annual General Inspection
<b>AHB</b>	Attack Helicopter Battalion
<b>AOG</b>	Association of Graduates
<b>AOT</b>	Army Orientation Training
<b>ARTEP</b>	Army Training and Evaluation Program
<b>AVLB</b>	Armored Vehicle Launch Bridge
<b>AWACS</b>	Airborne Warning and Control System
<b>AWOL</b>	Absent Without Leave
<b>Bde</b>	Brigade
<b>BMNT</b>	Begin Morning Nautical Twilight
<b>Bn</b>	Battalion

<b>CALFEX</b>	Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise
<b>Cdr</b>	Commander
<b>CFC</b>	Combined Forces Command
<b>CG</b>	Commanding General; typically, a one-star Brigadier General
<b>CGSC</b>	Command and General Staff College
<b>CINCEUR</b>	Commander in Chief, Europe
<b>CONUS</b>	Continental United States
<b>CSM</b>	Command Sergeant Major
<b>CWO</b>	Chief Warrant Officer
<b>CW3</b>	Chief Warrant Officer 3 <sup>rd</sup> Level; there are four ranks from 1 to 4
<b>DIA</b>	Department of Intelligence Agency
<b>DMZ</b>	Demilitarized Zone
<b>DOD</b>	Department of Defense
<b>EUSA</b>	Eighth U.S. Army
<b>FOB</b>	Forward Operation Base; an Aviation Squadron combat base
<b>1LT</b>	First Lieutenant
<b>HPBS</b>	High Performance Battle Staff
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters

<b>INPO</b>	Institute of Nuclear Power Operations
<b>IRR</b>	Individual Ready Reserve
<b>J-1, -2, -3, -4</b>	Joint Staff Personnel, Intelligence, Operations, & Logistics
<b>JAG</b>	Judge Advocate General; the military branch for Army lawyers
<b>JFS</b>	Jewish Family Services
<b>JSTARS</b>	Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (command and control aircraft)
<b>JOSE</b>	Joint Operational Support Element
<b>KCIA</b>	Korean Central Intelligence Agency
<b>LL</b>	Lesson Learned
<b>LOCE</b>	Linked Ops-Intel Centers Europe
<b>LTC</b>	Lieutenant Colonel, (silver oakleaf)
<b>LTG</b>	Lieutenant General (3 stars)
<b>MEPS</b>	Military Entrance and Processing Station
<b>MILES</b>	Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System
<b>MILPERCEN</b>	Military Personnel Center (Pentagon Level)
<b>MOA</b>	Memorandum of Agreement
<b>MOD</b>	ROK Ministry of Defense
<b>MSG</b>	Master Sergeant
<b>MSR</b>	Main Supply Route
<b>MWTC</b>	Mountain Warfare Training Center

<b>NCO</b>	Non-Commissioned Officer
<b>NG</b>	National Guard
<b>Nomex</b>	Brand name for a heat and flame-resistant textile jumpsuit used by pilots
<b>NTC</b>	National Training Center
<b>NVA</b>	North Vietnam Army
<b>O5</b>	Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
<b>O6</b>	Full Colonel, US. Army
<b>OER</b>	Officer Efficiency Report
<b>PFC</b>	Private First Class (enlisted rank)
<b>OPFOR</b>	Opposing Forces (training bad guys)
<b>ORLL</b>	Operational Readiness Lesson Learned
<b>PCS</b>	Permanent Change of Station
<b>PMO</b>	Program Management Office
<b>REFORGER</b>	Return of Forces to Germany; an annual U.S. exercise during the Cold War
<b>ROK</b>	Republic of Korea
<b>ROKA</b>	ROK Army
<b>S-1, -2, -3, -4</b>	Staff Personnel, Intelligenc, Operations, & Logistics
<b>SACLANT</b>	Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic
<b>SDI</b>	Strategic Defense Initiative
<b>TAC</b>	Tactical Officer; a military officer that oversees a cadet company
<b>TDY</b>	Temporary Duty
<b>TOE</b>	Table of Organization & Equipment
<b>TRADOC</b>	Training and Doctrine Command



<b>UAFK</b>	U.S. Air Force Korea
<b>UH-1H</b>	Military helicopter
<b>UNC</b>	U.N. Command
<b>UNFK</b>	U.S. Navy Force Korea
<b>USAFE</b>	U.S. Air Force Europe
<b>USAREC</b>	U.S. Army Recruiting Command
<b>USAREUR</b>	United States Army Europe
<b>USEUCOM</b>	United States Europe Command
<b>USFK</b>	U.S. Forces Korea
<b>VN</b>	Vietnam